

TAUPIN'S NEW CANDLE IN THE WIND
After Elton, Bernie goes on stage
THE EYE

THE MODEL DIET FOR TEENAGERS
She'll look good, you can stop worrying
HEALTH, PAGE 15

HEADS YOU WIN, TAILS YOU WIN
How the fat cats always end up quids in
FEATURES, PAGE 17

HOW TO GET YOURSELF AN OSCAR
Hollywood's winning formula revealed
THE EYE

INDEPENDENT

Tuesday 24 March 1998 45p (IRS0p) No 3,566

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

France hogs world cup tickets despite EC threat

By Paul Newman

WORLD CUP organisers in France are heading for a legal battle with the European Commission after refusing to make all remaining tickets for this summer's tournament available to foreign supporters.

The commission, unhappy that a large proportion of the 2.5 million tickets had already been sold to

French fans, wanted the remaining 160,000 tickets to be sold exclusively to non-French nationals. However, the World Cup organisers (CFO) said last night that they had refused to agree to the request on the grounds that it would have discriminated against the French.

The commission responded by saying it would start legal proceedings in an attempt to persuade the

CFO to change its policy. The commission said it could fine the CFO the equivalent of 10 per cent of its revenue from ticket sales.

England, Scotland and many other competing countries throughout Europe have complained at the shortage of tickets for their fans.

More than 60 per cent have already been allocated to the French, with only 21 per cent made available

to foreign football federations. On average, national federations will be allocated only 4,000 tickets for games in which their teams are competing.

The CFO wants to make 50,000 of the remaining tickets available to foreign federations, but to sell the other 110,000 tickets directly to fans throughout Europe. These would be sold exclusively by telephone, on a first-come first-served basis, treating

French and other nationals equally. Jacques Lambert, the CFO's managing director, said yesterday that the commission's demands "would have meant inverse discrimination against the French and constituted a gross injustice". He added: "Europe is a democracy and we have the right to defend our policy. If the EC fines us, we will appeal."

Stefan Rating, a commission

spokesman, said the CFO had refused to change its policy because of political pressure in France. Marie-George Buffet, the French Minister for Sport, said last week that the commission's position amounted to discrimination against the organising country. However, Mr Rating said the commission's demand to sell all remaining tickets to non-French people only was "a tiny discrimination".

compared to the favouritism shown towards the French earlier in the selling campaign.

The commission is expected to fire the opening shot in a legal battle by sending a formal statement of objection today. However, with the start of the tournament less than three months away, time is rapidly running out if the ticket sales system is to be changed.

Revealed: Labour's links with lobbyists

Exclusive

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Fresh evidence of a startlingly close relationship between Labour and its former staffers who now work for lobbyists is revealed by an official register of firms and their clients seen by *The Independent*.

A raft of bright, mostly young Labour employees left the party either just before or just after the general election for the more lucrative world of "public affairs".

The *Independent* understands that far from distancing itself from this new body of supporters, Labour has actively sought to retain its links with them. There have been at least two drinks parties at Millbank and invitations to a seminar at which sponsorship is discussed.

Among the party events which are believed to have been sponsored by clients of these lobbyists are some of the Welfare to Work roadshows which have been hosted by ministers around the country.

A senior figure in the lobbying world said last night that many of those who had made the transition were now finding

their loyalties divided. While they wanted to remain loyal to Labour, their employers demanded their clients came first.

"Many of these people are quite young and aren't really able to decide what's good or bad value for money. We are not terribly keen on the idea of giving money to any political party.

If our clients want to, our usual advice is to think very carefully."

While access to ministers was slightly more difficult under Labour, this was mainly because the party was more cliquey than the Conservatives. The three key advisers that lobbyists most wanted to know were Dan Corry at the Department of Trade and Industry, Ed Balls at the Treasury and Geoff Norris at the Downing Street Policy Unit, he said. A relationship with one of them would be particularly valuable because all had extremely low "call-back" factors.

But while Labour officials are wooing lobbyists, MPs are complaining that they are besieged by calls from them. The

chairs of select committees in the Commons say they have around two calls or letters every week, on average. Ex-Labour staff were useful to lobbyists because of their contacts but there were only a few really senior figures among them.

There is no suggestion that any Labour minister or MP has taken money to perform tasks for lobbyists, as some Conservatives did. However, one senior political consultant said last night that it was "standard practice" to offer sponsorship in return for a minister's presence at a seminar or other event.

A Labour spokeswoman said there had only been one seminar for lobbyists, and that was not simply for former Labour employees. "We just invited lobbyists in. You know we are looking for sponsorship for various things. There is no question of asking former employees, because lobbying companies can send who they like. Some of them would have been former employees," she said.

Background, page 8

If it's Tuesday, then it must be Ghana...



Bill Clinton and his wife, Hillary, greeting the crowds at Independence Square in Ghana's capital, Accra, yesterday. The visit was the United States President's first stop on a six-nation, 12-day tour of Africa. Photograph: Win McNamee

Yeltsin fires entire government

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

AFTER being written off again by the outside world as too ill to govern, Boris Yeltsin roared back into the lime-light yesterday by sacking his entire government, including two of its pivotal figures - Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, and his most aggressive free marketeer, Anatoly Chubais, the First Deputy Prime Minister.

Although his decision was a thunderbolt from the blue, the

President was quick to issue a reassurance that Russia would press ahead with its programme of economic reforms, which are widely blamed by Russians for causing years of economic misery. The dismissal of the government "does not mean a change of course in our policy," he said in a nationwide television address from the Kremlin. It was an effort to give the reforms a "new impulse".

The sudden bout of political bloodletting drew a cautious reaction from the White House, which would eventually be confirmed in his post. At one point

which appeared to have no inkling that a major upheaval was planned. Bill Clinton, on a trip to Ghana, was left to say, somewhat lamely, that he "hoped that the general direction of policy will be unaffected".

The US will be reassured by Mr Yeltsin's appointment as acting prime minister of Sergei Kiriyenko, 35, the fuel and energy minister, who has a reputation as a committed reformist.

It was unclear last night whether he would eventually be confirmed in his post. At one point

yesterday, to the surprise of observers, Mr Yeltsin even talked of temporarily doing the job himself.

Although most other senior ministers are expected to survive, including the Foreign Minister, Yevgeny Primakov, the sackings are convincing evidence of Boris Yeltsin's star-like penchant for centralising power on himself.

In recent years, Mr Chubais, who is seen as Western investors as the linchpin of the reform process and who was the architect of Mr Yeltsin's re-election, has lost three government posts only to bounce back. The 42-year-old economist, who is already chairman of the national electricity monopoly, said yesterday that he expected to be flooded with job offers. But he is expected to remain in the President's team. So, too, is the interior minister, Anatoly Kulikov, who was also sacked by decree.

The departure of Mr Chernomyrdin, an unfailingly loyal Yeltsin ally, came as more of a surprise. For months he has

5 facts about millionaires and charity

- 1 There are more than 120,000 millionaires in the UK.
- 2 Lottery millionaires are over 100,000 times more likely to give to charity than the general public.
- 3 Of 24,000 millionaires in the UK, only one had given to charity in the last year.
- 4 Bill Gates says his Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, estimated at \$40 billion, will give away \$100 billion over 50 years.
- 5 The world's 7 richest men have enough money to end global poverty.

Artist stole dozens of heads and torsos, court is told

By Kathy Marks

IN ONE OF the most macabre and unusual cases to be heard in a British court in recent years, an artist was yesterday accused of stealing human body parts and using them to create casts for public exhibited sculptures.

Anthony-Noel Kelly, 42, who teaches at the Prince of Wales Institute of Architecture, is alleged to have stolen dozens of embalmed limbs, heads and torsos from the Royal College of Surgeons, smuggling them out of the building with the help of a former trainee laboratory technician, Niel Lindsay. The remains, which were kept by the college

for teaching purposes, were concealed in black dustbin liners and carried out in rucksacks at the end of the day, Southwark Crown Court was told.

At the start of the trial, the jury were told that they would be excused from service if they felt unable to cope with the "disturbing" evidence, particularly if they had been recently bereaved.

Andrew Campbell-Tiech, for the prosecution, said the trial concerned a simple case of theft. "It is not about art, or whether what Mr Kelly created was art," he said.

"It is not about public outrage, it is about the dishonest means that were used to pursue

Mr Kelly's desire to exhibit this work."

Mr Kelly, a former butcher and abattoir worker, and a cousin of the Duke of Norfolk and Mr Lindsay, 24, of Islington, north London, both deny theft. Mr Kelly denies and additional charge of handling stolen goods.

The court was told that the two men were arrested after some of Mr Kelly's works were exhibited at the London Contemporary Arts Fair last year. Photographs of the sculptures, which included a striking head and torso, were published in the *Independent on Sunday*, where they caught the eye of Dr Laurence Martin, Her Majesty's Inspector of Anatomy.

When police raided Mr Kelly's home in Clapham, south

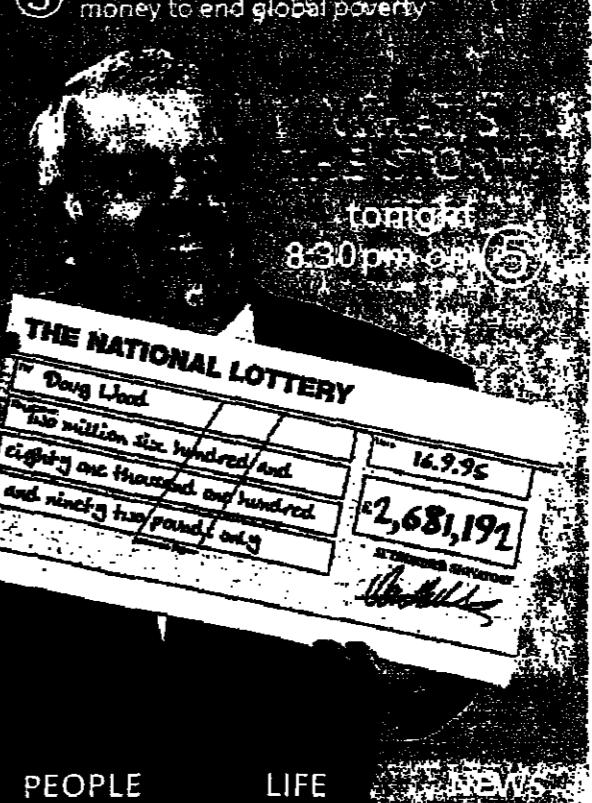
London, they found a collection of plaster moulds of human body parts including "various feet" and two heads. He directed officers to a field on his family's estate near Ashford, Kent, where he said he had buried all of the originals. Other remains were later found at the home in Brixton of a female friend of the sculptor.

The case continues today.

Today's news
Publisher sold
AMERICA'S largest publishing company, Random House, whose authors include Michael Crichton, Norman Mailer and John Updike, was sold yesterday to the German media giant Bertelsmann. Page 2

£800m car parks
THE car-parking empire NCP was sold yesterday for £800m to the American company Cadent. Founders Sir Donald Gosling and Ronald Hobson shared £580m. Page 3

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German publisher swoops on Fatherland

By David Usborne and Imre Karacs

IN THE latest tremor to strike the book world, America's largest publishing company, Random House, whose authors include Michael Crichton, Norman Mailer and John Updike, was sold yesterday to the German media behemoth, Bertelsmann.

Ending weeks of speculation over its next move, the voracious Bertelsmann, already the world's third largest media company after Disney and Time Warner, confirmed it is buying Random House for an undisclosed sum.

The disposal of Random House by its owner, Advance Publications, spells a radical realignment of New York's perennially self-absorbed publishing industry. Advance is owned by Si Newhouse, who also controls the Condé Nast stable of magazines as well as the venerable, the *New Yorker*.

While refusing to offer details, Mr Newhouse said he was letting go of Random House to focus his group's energies on the magazine chain as well as Advance's newspaper and cable television interests. Condé Nast titles include *Vanity Fair*, *GQ Magazine* and *Vogue*. Among Mr Newhouse's most loyal officers is Tina Brown, the British editor of *New Yorker*, and formerly the editor of *Vanity Fair*.

It is difficult to gain detailed insight into the fortunes of the *New Yorker*, or indeed any of Mr Newhouse's ventures because Advance remains a privately-held company, as does Bertelsmann.

Ms Brown's husband, Harold Evans, the former *Sunday Times* editor, was head of Random House until last November, when he resigned and took sanctuary back in the newspaper world at the *Daily*

News, the New York tabloid owned by Mort Zuckerman.

Bertelsmann, Europe's largest media conglomerate, is based in the small north German town of Gütersloh and made its money out of bibles in the first century of its existence. Most of its shares are owned by a charity, which controls the weekly *Die Zeit*.

Solid, reliable and conservative are the epithets used in connection with the company set up in 1835 which now employs 60,000 people in 50 countries. Not a lot happened in Gütersloh until 1946, when its owner, Reinhard Mohn who still cycles to head office in his home town, returned from a Prisoner-of-War camp in Kansas. From America Mr Mohn had brought one big idea: book clubs. Within four years, the Bertelsmann clubs had 1 million members. In 1962, it went international, setting up the first book club in Spain.

In 1969 it made its first major acquisition in the German magazine market, taking a controlling stake in publishers Gruner & Jahr and suddenly owning bright publications, such as *Stern* and the women's magazine *Bright*, as well as weeklies *Die Zeit*, *Die Zeitung* and *Die Zeit*.

The purchase by a German conglomerate of Random House, publisher of Robert Harris's fictional oeuvre about the global triumph of Nazi Germany that did not happen, *Fatherland* – is certain to raise concern about Bertelsmann's tightening grip on US publishing. The transaction must be approved by US regulators.

Latest chapter, page 23



Photograph: Ron Galella/Tom Wargacki

FAMOUS NAMES

Random House's most famous writers: Philip Roth, Norman Mailer, John Updike, Saul Bellow, Maya Angelou, Michael Crichton, Isaac Asimov, Agatha Christie, Margaret Atwood, Harold Bloom, David Mamet, Nicholson Baker, Martin Amis, Woody Allen.

LOVABLE CEST ... Si Newhouse bought the *New Yorker* for £800m in 1995; it is thought to be £20m

a year, despite the efforts of its editor, Tina Brown. Nevertheless, Newhouse is thought to like it because of the kudos it gives him and his publishing empire.

ART FAN

With that other reclusive millionaire and friend, Charles Saatchi, Si Newhouse is one of the world's biggest private collectors of contemporary art. In 1998, he paid \$17m for Jasper Johns's painting *False Start*, the highest price paid at that time for the

work of a living artist, and he owns a large number of Lucian Freud works.

LATE STARTER

Newhouse is something of a late starter. A college drop-out, he was a rich kid with little to do until he was 50. It was only then, shortly before his father's death in 1979, that he was given a senior position in his father's publishing business; until then he had never been trusted with anything but lowly positions.

The man from Vogue who cares little for fashion

IN THE NEWS

SI NEWHOUSE

To look at his magazines, and his shortened first name, Si Newhouse, 70, seems like a patrician member of America's old-established upper class. The most famous of his magazines, like the *New Yorker* and *Tony*, chronicle the goings-on of the political and cultural elite of America and the world, so you would imagine the man who owns them could be lifted from their pages, writes Paul McCann.

In fact, he is the grandson of East European immigrants who spoke no English and at just a little over five feet tall is not anyone's idea of patrician. And for a man who owns *GQ* and *Vogue*, he is reputed to be something of a shabby dresser. In computing he is known to be quickly spoken and unimpressive.

The great love of his life is reported to be his dog. He holds parties for it and owners of similar dogs. His old apartment on the Upper East Side of Manhattan had stairs going to the windows so the dog could look out. Yet, without the personality traits of other media moguls, Newhouse is successful indeed. His personal worth has been put at \$4.5bn (£2.7bn) by *Forbes* magazine, two places ahead of Rupert Murdoch in its list of the world's rich.

He inherited a middling newspaper business from his father Sam in 1979 and turned it into a \$13bn empire which to this day is owned by the Newhouse family. It includes 29 newspapers, Condé Nast magazines, until yesterday the publishing firms of Random House, Knopf and Crown, the *New*

Yorker magazine and American TV cable franchises with 1 million subscribers.

His editors are famously well treated and on appointment often receive a six-figure personal cheque from Newhouse to help buy a Manhattan apartment. New York wags estimate that trendy eateries usually have half their covers paid for by 'Uncle Si' and his generous expense accounts.

Yet this soft-spoken, generous man can be as hard as nails. Editors who thought themselves close to him have read about their sackings in rival publications. The decision to sell Random House is ascribed to the same part of his character that likes to create waves and shock. He will arrive at Condé Nast headquarters in New York before dawn and is famous for prowling the building, firing memos from yellow legal pads that wrongfoot and instill fear in employees. Unlike better-known magnates, Newhouse has a reputation for political neutrality and freedom for his editors.

Brother Donald runs the newspaper division and the sale of Random House has been interpreted by some as the family looking to make a neat transfer of power to the next generation. Newhouse's children are not keen to play big parts in the business. So nephew Jonathan Newhouse, who looks after the international magazine division, is tipped to step into Si's shoes looking after the whole magazine division. Another nephew, Steven, is reportedly being groomed to take over from Donald at the helm of the newspapers. In one theory the need for family control meant Random House had to be sold because the Steven and Jonathan inheritance plan leaves no one to look after the book publishing.

Bomb-site likely lads make £580m fortune from sale of car parks

By Randdeep Ramesh and Michael Harrison



Sir Donald: £800m buy-out

FOR MANY, there is little to be gained from the nation's car parks. But for one pair of likely lads, there are, in fact, 580 million reasons to be interested – and they all have the Queen's hold on them.

Former leading seaman Sir Donald Gosling and ex-soldier Ronald Hobson have long been trailed as the "car-park kings of Britain". Yesterday's £800m buy-out of their NCP empire, saw them not just relinquish the throne, but abolish the monarchy.

The founders of the company – with more than 500 sites in Britain and owner of the breakdown service Green Flag – pocketed £580m after selling the business to an American company, Mr Hobson, Sir Donald and their family trusts, between them own 72.5 per cent of the group, which has been sold to Cendant Corporation for £800m.

Their story is the stuff that post-war British films were made of. Ron Hobson, a demobbed former seaman with a

brain for business and nose for money-making ventures, saw the potential for developing bomb-stricken sites in London which led to a chance meeting with Don Gosling, in 1948 a trainee surveyor with Westminster City Council. After a dinner, the pair bought a bomb site in Red Lion Square, Holborn, for £200 and converted it to a car park.

The business started trading as Central Car Parks and within a decade the two founders had built up a chain of a dozen city-centre car parks. They took

towards a Royal yacht to replace Britannia – with the remarking that it should come to HM being bailed out by a glorified parking attendant".

One piece of publicity neither pair wanted was the messy take-over of a smaller rival Europarks. NCP did swallow up its smaller competitor – but not before the company and some senior managers were accused of a spring campaign against Europarks.

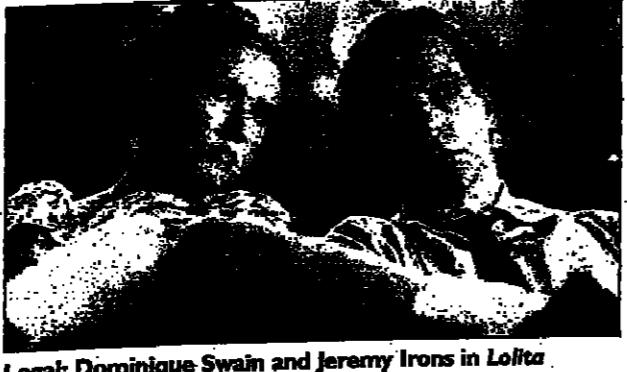
The episode left the company with a disregard for many journalists – to the point where the enmity saw the company refuse basic information to Parking Review – the industry's trade paper.

Now it appears, it is NCP's turn to be gobbled up. Cendant, the new owners, is one of America's biggest corporations, with a stockmarket value of \$30bn.

The American giant said it planned to invest heavily in IT systems for the NCP network so that customers could in future pay by credit card at automatic booths. It also aims to move further into management of local authority-owned car parks.

Business Outlook, page 25

Lolita film cleared for screening uncut

Legal: Dominique Swain and Jeremy Irons in *Lolita*

A FILM of the controversial child sex novel *Lolita* has been passed uncut by the chief censor for viewing in cinemas nationwide.

Andreas Whitlam Smith, the new president of the British Board of Film Classification, has granted the movie an 18 certificate after consulting police and child psychiatrists to ensure it does not condone paedophilia.

The film, starring Jeremy Irons as middle-aged man who becomes obsessed with a sexually precocious under-age girl, has attracted concern from anti-pornography groups that it could break obscenity laws.

But Mr Whitlam Smith, who took over at the helm of the

BBFC in January, said the film handled its subject responsibly by showing the feelings which this subject generates, but we have been extremely thorough in seeking opinions from authoritative

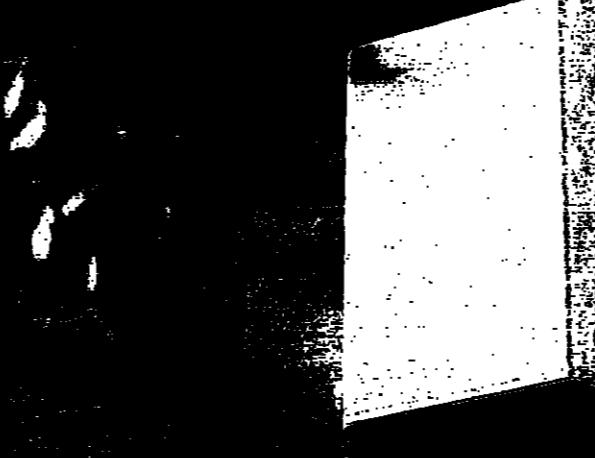
sources.

"At the end of the day, it is a portrayal which shows a tormented, agonising and evil relationship which ends up hurting everybody concerned. I am satisfied it cannot be seen as corrupting or encouraging of paedophilia."

The film's director, Adrian Lyne, used a 19-year-old body double to film physical scenes in the movie which – like the original novel by Vladimir Nabokov – details the sexual relationship between Humbert and Lolita.

Nabokov's novel was first published in Britain in 1959. It is used as an exam text in schools and studied widely at universities.

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Eton: satisfactory, but could do better

Inspectors praise top public school, but say some lessons are didactic and boring. Judith Judd reports

TEACHERS at Eton, Britain's most famous public school, have been complimented by inspectors on their scholarship but told to use less "chalk and talk".

An inspection report on the 558-year old school, which charges parents £14,000 a year, is generally positive but says that some teachers tend to lecture their pupils and should vary their teaching methods more.

The report also takes issue with the way the curriculum is arranged. It points out that geography is not offered to boys in their first year at the school, and only for two periods a week in the following year.

Pupils are praised for their "exemplary" behaviour and high attainment though they are "sometimes apparently lacking in intellectual curiosity." Boring lessons are usually to blame for the fact that they are at times too reliant on their teachers' guidance. In dynamic lessons they are much more critical.

The inspection was carried out under the public schools' self-inspection regime with a team mainly of independent school heads and teachers led by a retired member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate. Inspectors praise teachers' "high standards of professional knowledge and scholarship"



Exemplary: Well-behaved pupils during their first day at £14,000-a-year Eton, which gets a C-plus from the inspectors

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

and high expectations but add that "in many departments, while strong expository teaching was widespread, consistent attention to aspects of teaching methods... could be deficient".

In modern languages, for instance, "in many lessons, the over-dominant part played by the teacher reduced the role of the pupils to simple reaction rather

than active participation."

Boarding at Eton is impressive, says the report, with house-masters who are "immensely caring and knowledgeable about their charges". There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities including sub aqua, windsurfing, philosophy and wine-tasting.

John Lewis, the school's

head, whose leadership is highly praised, said teachers were already examining their methods as part of a programme of professional development. But he pointed out that the traditional methods criticised by the inspectors were often effective:

the modern languages department achieved outstanding results. "I recall the comment of

a head who was told that lessons in his school were didactic. He replied that that was a jolly good thing too."

On the curriculum, Mr Lewis questioned whether the inspectors had grasped the merits of Eton's unconventional timetable. Geography was left out in the first year because nearly all pupils did French

and Latin GCSE in two years. That allowed them a very wide choice of interesting and challenging subjects once they reached their GCSE year.

Asked whether he thought the report was fair, he said that the inspectors had done a thorough job. "We were very pleased with many of the findings. It shows that this is a hard-

working, committed school with boys who are wanting and expecting to go places. But it is only a snapshot. It is primarily an academic report. We didn't feel they fully grasped the importance of what goes on outside the classroom in a boarding school or understood some of the things which are individual to us."

THE FOOTBALL Association said yesterday that the Newcastle United sleaze allegations had strengthened its intention to introduce a code of conduct for clubs. But it has been advised against bringing disciplinary action while the club's position remains unclear.

A statement is due from Newcastle United this morning, when it announces its half-yearly results to the City, and the club will find it impossible to dodge the question of its management crisis. Stock market rules meant that no statement could be issued before the figures were released.

Chairman Freddy Shepherd and vice-chairman Douglas Hall, both major shareholders in the club, have faced a barrage of criticisms over allegations in the *Newspaper of the World* that they indulged in sex and drinking sessions around the world. They were quoted calling Newcastle women "dogs" and mocking players.

Three non-executive directors, Sir Terence Harrison, John Mayo and Denis Cassidy, have made clear their concern over the claims and were expected to raise them at a crunch meeting of the board yesterday.

The directors, who faced calls of "Sack the board" from fans as they entered St James' Park yesterday, were locked in discussions nearly all day.

Graham Kelly, the Football Association's chief executive, said the allegations surrounding Mr Shepherd and Mr Hall were "deeply damaging".

The anger of supporters is utterly understandable. They have deserved better, much better," Mr Kelly said.

In response to criticisms that the Football Association was doing nothing, Mr Kelly said it had been advised that disciplinary action was not the way forward at this stage. "Our legal advice has been clear, we should await a statement then action by Newcastle United."

But he said the FA was giving urgent consideration to proposals from Sir John Smith, the former deputy commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, in a report for the association.

"His recent report called for a code of conduct by which all those active in the game can be judged. Such a code would be bound to reflect the lessons learned in recent days."

Jim Cousins, the Labour MP for Newcastle Central, has also called for Northumbria Police to investigate because the allegations "are seriously damaging to the good name of the city".

A spokesman for the force said they would be trawling the evidence to see if any offences had been committed.

As the storm surrounding Mr Shepherd and Mr Hall, the son of former chairman Sir John Hall, showed no signs of abating, Tony Banks, the sports minister, added his voice to calls for the men's resignation.

Sir John Hall, the wealthy businessman whose money helped Newcastle to success, has been tipped for a return to the chairmanship if his son steps down. But Kevin Miles, chairman of Newcastle Independent Supporters' Association, suggested that not all fans would welcome Sir John's return.

FA holds fire on club sleaze claims

By Louise Jury

THE FOOTBALL Association said yesterday that the Newcastle United sleaze allegations had strengthened its intention to introduce a code of conduct for clubs. But it has been advised against bringing disciplinary action while the club's position remains unclear.

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BBC defies lottery critics

BBC GOVERNORS have given their full backing to a controversial new lottery game show, *The Big Ticket*, writes Paul McCann.

The corporation unveiled details of the show yesterday and insisted that it was "giving information" about scratch-cards, not "promoting" them and so was not in breach of its charter. A claim that was immediately dismissed as "a load of cobblers" by Gerald Kaufman, chairman of Parliament's media select committee.

MPs are unhappy that *The Big Ticket* will require contestants to purchase the new £2 "TV Dreams" scratch-cards to win places on the show and that viewers who wish to play at home will also need to buy the cards. There has also been concern that the contestants for the show are chosen by Camelot, the National Lottery operator and that the prize money comes from Camelot - which seems to contravene the BBC's guidelines.

The new show - to be presented by Anthea Turner and Patrick Kielty - is thought to be the most expensive game show ever on British television. The 16-week run is thought to have cost £200,000 an episode and involves celebrities playing action-packed games on behalf of scratchcard winners.

Mr Kaufman wants the show to be banned and the issue will be debated in the Commons tomorrow night.

Train carrying nuclear fuel derailed

A train carrying fuel flasks to a nuclear power station was derailed yesterday. The front two wheels of the locomotive pulling two empty flasks to the Heysham nuclear plant in Lancashire left the rails between the power station and Morecambe.

Plant operators Nuclear Electric described the incident as "very minor". But anti-nuclear campaigners said it underlined the dangers of transporting nuclear fuel by rail.

Spent fuel from the two Heysham advanced gas cooled reactors is transported to the Sellafield reprocessing plant in Cumbria every week. The empty flasks are then taken back to the Heysham site.

£90m boost to raise computers skills

CENTRES of excellence are to be set up across Britain to tackle the shortage of people with computer skills, David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, announced yesterday.

Colleges, companies and training and enterprise councils are being invited to bid for a slice of a £90m fund to help people update their computer skills. Mr Blunkett said at least 40 centres, aimed at workers in engineering and manufacturing, would be set up by the end of the year.

— Ben Russell

Carer's drug cocktail

A SENIOR care assistant, who was suffering from depression, gave an overdose of sedatives to a resident in an old people's home believing that the victim wanted to die, an Old Bailey court was told.

Joyce Franklin gave the cocktail of drugs to Dorothy Clementson, 93, but the elderly woman survived. Franklin, 40, from Guildford, Surrey, admitted a charge of administering a noxious thing so as to endanger life and was remanded on bail.

Scar healer goes on sale

A TRANSPARENT sticking plaster which can erase unsightly scars will today be made available to the public for the first time.

The adhesive gel sheet causes red, raised scars to flatten and fade over two to four months. Cica-

Care, made by the London-based pharmaceutical company Smith & Nephew, is used in hospitals to treat scarring caused by burns, injuries or surgery. From today, it will also be sold over the counter at selected Boots stores.

Man on sex charges

A 40-YEAR-OLD man was remanded in custody for three days when he appeared before magistrates in Leeds yesterday charged with two sex attacks.

Clive Barwell, of Wortley, Leeds - who did not speak during the three-minute hearing - faces two allegations of kidnap, one allegation of rape, one allegation of indecent assault on a woman and two allegations of robbery.

— Ben Russell

Scars

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Time for a break: Refreshments being served as entries for the NatWest Arts Prize were unloaded for judging yesterday. More than 600 works are competing for this year's total prize money of £36,000

Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra

Girls smoke to appear cool for their boyfriends

By Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

TEENAGE girls do not start smoking because they want to lose weight - as is popularly believed - but rather because they want to appear tough and attract older boyfriends.

The popular assertion that a continual stream of pictures of "fashionably emaciated" supermodels such as Kate Moss results in girls turning to cigarettes as weight suppressants is not correct, according to a new study into smoking in adolescence.

The report, which looked at 3,500 schoolchildren, warns that young people are not at all influenced by media warnings on the harm smoking causes. They are fully aware of the health risks but just do not envisage themselves ever getting old enough to have to endure them.

While girls were generally more concerned about thinness than were boys, there was "little evidence to link this concern with cigarette smoking", found the team from the Trust for the Study of Adolescence.

"Although a relationship with smoking behaviour and concern with thinness was identified, the magnitude of this relationship was extremely small, accounting for less than 2 per cent of the variance in smoking behaviour," the report said. "It is very likely that this relationship may be much more a function of a general personality trait such as neuroticism than of a specific concern with weight."

Girls dismissed a link between smoking and weight with comments such as that from Alison, a Year 7 non-smoker, who said: "Rubbish. Doesn't make you lose weight - stop [ing] eating so much would help you lose weight but not smoking."

The report concludes that health professionals should acknowledge that teenagers are testing out one of the most common social representations of adults, and that many people smoke because they enjoy it. Smokers were seen as sociable, exciting and party-going where-



DAILY POEM

Love among the Experts

By E A Markham

(For a member of the team evaluating a World Bank Development Project in Papua New Guinea, 1984)

She's one of the panel, professional
behind a table. The talk is, as always,
how to develop (has she been told
of last night's rape?) something hidden.
Too late, too hot, too lacking
in interest to come up with definitions today.
Outside, women feed their children
while they wait. Here, on the panel
the lady's breasts are covered.
We fumble and stumble and rising to a past
occasion, rifle the blouse for a nibble
of what the past holds. Less than before, dear God;
but this, this is a recipe that can be digested.

Outside, women with long breasts
sustain the crowd, tumbling patience: a scene
so like a glimpse back through centuries: the crowd
begins to stir and shift. Inside, I join the team:
will this work, will this work?

This poem comes from *A Papua New Guinea Sojourn: more pleasures of exile*, a travel book based on E A Markham's experiences as a media co-ordinator in Papua New Guinea in the 1980s (Carcanet, £16.95). Born in Montserrat, E A Markham is now professor of creative writing at Sheffield Hallam University.

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دعا من الارض

Animals lose out in Europe's sad zoos



Two polar bears playing in their enclosure in Berlin zoo. Not all European zoos are as well kept, according to a report by RSPCA inspectors

By Katherine Butler
and Clare Garner

BRITAIN failed yesterday to convince the European Union of the need to introduce licensing and inspection laws which would crack down on cruelty to animals in zoos.

British environment ministers urged their Continental counterparts in Brussels to agree that in future only zoos satisfying EU animal welfare inspectors should receive a licence to operate. Angela Eagle, a junior environment minister, insisted that voluntary agreements are inadequate to

tackle the problem of maltreatment - which exists even at supposedly reputable zoos.

While there was wide support in principle for an umbrella directive, European ministers were keen that the detail of how to run zoos should be left to national governments. Germany, the Netherlands and Greece would not even agree to a broad directive, saying zoo rules are better left to the nation state.

There are more than 1,000 zoos in the 15 EU member states and, according to a recent report by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to

Animals, many of them are housing distressed animals who are living in cramped conditions and are deprived of medical attention even when they are obviously ill.

An RSPCA undercover investigation of Continental zoos found many animals in a "very distressed state". Cases included an elephant needing hospital treatment in Germany, a tiger dragging its back feet in Italy, a lioness unable to stand in Belgium, hippos unable to submerge themselves in water in Spain and oryx stressed by being placed opposite a lion enclosure in France. The RSPCA

singled out Rome Zoo, the Parc Zoologique and the Ménagerie des Jardins Plantes in Paris, and Limburg Zoo in Genk, Belgium, as particularly bad.

Only a handful of member states, including Britain, Germany and the Netherlands, have laws which are enforced. Even so, the RSPCA has found cases of mistreatment in these countries.

Ministers insist that Britain's zoos are "okay", but the campaigning group Zoocheck says there are at least "half a dozen bad ones" and distressed animals even in the better ones. It cites Basil-

don Zoo in Essex as failing to meet even "middle-ground expectations" for standards of welfare and says that the elephant enclosure at London Zoo is "appalling".

Another survey, by the Born Free Foundation, also reported untreated animals, including an elephant in a Spanish zoo with a wound "as big as a chopping board", and elderly animals which could barely stand up. Polar bears and big cats were found in surroundings so small and spartan that they were reduced to a psychotic state, just pacing about.

EU officials said the British

initiative had "moved zoos up the agenda", but stressed that the very strong political resistance of the Germans would be difficult to overcome. They suggested that an effective piece of EU legislation might have to be put off until after the ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty which at Britain's insistence has a protocol on animal welfare. Germany argues that a strong but non-binding EU "recommendation" on zoos would be preferable to a binding but weak directive.

Michael Meacher, the environment minister, stressed that a network of zoos through-

out the Community could achieve more in conservation terms than individual zoos acting alone. "Zoos have a vital role to play in conservation work," he said.

Some 230 zoos in the Community are involved in programmes of action to conserve 150 endangered species - ranging from the European otter to the Siberian tiger. A new directive will support this trend and encourage other zoos to follow suit."

Mr Meacher added: "At present there is evidence of poor standards at too many zoos in Europe."

Channel Tunnel fire no accident

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

Euromtunnel last night confirmed that the 1996 Channel Tunnel fire, which caused £200m damage, was deliberate. Its lawyers had received information from the investigating judge that any "accidental causes linked to the equipment and installations have been ruled out by the experts. This makes a malicious act the most likely cause".

Patrick Ponsolle, Euromtunnel chairman, said the conclusions did not surprise him; the company maintained its legal claim against "those responsible". The fire, on a lorry on a Shuttle wagon, shut one of the two tracks and disrupted passenger and freight traffic for months.

Five wagons and 15 lorries were destroyed by the blaze, which also put eight drivers in hospital. The conclusion that foul play was the cause was made in an expert's report sent last week to the French judge heading the inquiry into the fire in November 1996. Euromtunnel ran a restricted service after the fire, losing millions of pounds.

Gerald Lestigne, prosecutor in charge of the case, said: "The judge has ordered a number of investigations ... that have not yet pinpointed the perpetrator or perpetrators."

New safety standards were set after the fire exposed shortcomings in procedures. Euromtunnel wanted less intervention from health and safety authorities, but the fire made this more difficult to argue.

In January the company requested that limits on the number of lorries it can carry on its HGV trains to be lifted. The requirement was one of a package of conditions laid down by the Anglo-French Intergovernmental Commission - which regulates tunnel safety - before it would allow lorries through again. The request was turned down. In the fire, smoke from a blazing lorry engulfed the club car, nearly choking those inside before they were rescued.

Computer struck dumb by quirks of Welsh

TECHNOLOGY has hit the linguistic buffers at BBC Wales's Cardiff headquarters where a new computer is refusing to understand "the language of heaven", writes Tony Heath.

Defeated by quirks of Welsh, a language spoken by one in five of Wales's 2.6 million people, the £4m box of tricks, bought

from the United States, is scratching its chips with bafflement and working to rule.

The super-fast system was programmed with what was thought to be a full Welsh vocabulary. But the way some Welsh words mutate in different contexts is proving too much for it to cope with. For ex-

ample, the Welsh word for "bridge" can be either "bont" or "pont". "Kitchen" translates as "cegin" or "gegin".

Asked to perform simple tasks the screen goes blank, the words used in everyday speech. "A new Welsh-only system will be installed at no extra cost to us. This time we hope it will fully understand the language," he said.

BBC Wales spokesman Huw Rossiter explained that although the system was designed to be bilingual it was not up to speed because it failed to recognise words used in everyday speech.

"A new Welsh-only system will be installed at no extra cost to us. This time we hope it will fully understand the language," he said.

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Preventing diseases with a cup of water

On Thursday 26th March 1998, The Independent will be publishing an 8 page report in association with WaterAid about the issues surrounding people's access to clean water and effective sanitation in the developing world.

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ON SUNDAY

Talk of reshuffle is junk, says No 10

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

"JUNK FOOD" was fed to newspaper about Tony Blair's next reshuffle in an attempt to stop business being put off from taking on ministerial roles in the Blair government. Whitehall sources said last night.

A fresh spate of reshuffle stories that the Paymaster-General, Geoffrey Robinson, was to be moved from the Treasury to become the transport

minister were dismissed as the "junk food of political journalism" by the Prime Minister's official spokesman.

"Only one person knows when and if there will be a reshuffle, with a small number of people to whom he may or may not have indicated his thoughts. They do not include anyone who spoke to the press. All reshuffle stories are crap," the spokesman said.

However, there was a strong belief around Whitehall yesterday that

the reshuffle stories were Treasury-inspired to prepare public opinion to avoid a move by Mr Robinson being interpreted as punishment for using a perfectly legal tax shelter. Some ministers fear that other businessmen would not wish to face similar criticism for routine business manoeuvres within the law. "I have heard businessmen saying if this is what you get, then it's not worth it," a ministerial source said.

There is concern within Whitehall

at the way that Mr Robinson has been hounded since it was disclosed he had a £12m offshore trust in Guernsey. As a close friend of the Prime Minister and a Treasury minister, Mr Robinson has been a prime target for Tory sniping, but he was the second minister with a background in big business to come under fire.

Lord Simon, the trade minister in the Lords, the former chief executive of BP, was forced to sell his oil stakes in the company over an alleged conflict of interests between his shareholdings and his job, after weeks of attacks over a blind trust, although he had done nothing illegal.

The preparation this weekend for a move by Mr Robinson was seen as an attempt to soften the blow when he is switched to another ministry – a move predicted by *The Independent*. Whether he will be moved to John Prescott's "super ministry" to replace transport minister Gavin Strang remains an open question. Mr

Robinson's private finance initiative (PFI) tasks would fit in better with the Department of Trade and Industry than Mr Prescott's Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, although there was speculation that it would be doubly embarrassing to have Mr Robinson – believed to have been on the board of some Maxwell companies – at the DTI when it published its report on the Maxwell empire.

The lower ranks are gearing up for

a big reshuffle, largely involving a round of musical chairs rather than sackings. Those on the move after the first year in office could include Alan Milburn, the health minister; Stephen Byers, schools minister; and Helen Liddell, economic secretary to the Treasury. They are playing down as "too soon" suggestions they will be promoted into the Cabinet to replace David Clark, minister for public office, or Mr Strang. "Peter Mandelson will be the first in," said one minister.

Mowlam in fraud crackdown

By Colin Brown

VOTERS should be given ID "swipe cards" before being allowed to vote to stop widespread fraud at the polls in Northern Ireland, an all-party group of MPs said last night.

Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, is expected to take action on the measures to curb fraud, but they will not be in place in time for the referendum due to be held on the peace process in May.

The warning about the possibility of polls being rigged by fraud came as Sinn Fein returned to the negotiating table and the two governments prepared to move the agenda forward today.

The threat posed by electoral fraud to the reliability of polls in Ulster was raised by the Commons select committee on Northern Ireland, which said widespread vote-stealing was unacceptable but there was a poor record of successful prosecutions.

The former Northern Ireland MP William McCrae, a member of Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, yesterday claimed vote stealing may have cost him his seat in Mid-Ulster at the last election, when it was won by the Sinn Fein chief negotiator, Martin McGuinness, with a majority of 1,883.

The committee's findings will cause concern within the Government about ways of combating fraud when the referendums go ahead.

The introduction of electronic swipe cards was proposed by Pat Bradley, the chief electoral officer for Northern Ireland, who said attempts to stop fraud by requiring voters to show medical cards had

failed, because the cards had been forged.

He identified at least three different types of voting fraud – impersonation, in which a voter impersonates someone eligible to vote; multiple voting, in which the voter may be registered to vote in more than one place; and multiple registration, when the voter gives false addresses. Northern Ireland polls also have to contend with intimidation of the voters.

Absent voting – allowing postal votes – rose by 38 per cent in Mid-Ulster between the general elections in 1992 and 1997, but the numbers increased by higher percentages in other seats, including 45 per cent in Belfast West, won by Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein president, and 42 per cent in Belfast East, won by Peter Robinson, Mr Paisley's deputy.

The committee said: "Absent voting provides a serious threat to the integrity of the electoral system in Northern Ireland." The MPs concluded: "The present list of documents which prove identity should be replaced by a new, universally-issued electoral card."

The committee, chaired by former Northern Ireland Secretary and Tory MP Peter Brooke, said: "There is sufficient evidence of organised voting-theft to indicate that the problem of electoral malpractice is serious."

As Sinn Fein returned to the talks, David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, called for the expulsion of Sinn Fein for links with IRA killings, in breach of the Mitchell principles.

Mr Adams warned Mr Trimble against trying to reach a deal with the nationalist SDLP cutting Sinn Fein out.



In focus: John Edmonds, head of the GMB union, using a reporter's Swiss Army knife to adjust his glasses before yesterday's press conference

Photograph: John Voss

Old Labour weighs in with warnings on minimum wage

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

Old Labour continued its assault on the Government yesterday when two of the party's biggest benefactors warned ministers against setting a lower minimum wage for young people. Following last week's broadside from the labour movement over union recognition, John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMB

general union and Rodney Bickerstaffe, of Unison, the public-service union, opened a new front on low pay.

Mr Edmonds, considered to be a moderate, said plans to exempt youngsters from statutory minimum pay or subject them to a lower rate risked alienating a large section of the working population. Mr Bickerstaffe, a left-winger, said the minimum should be the same for all workers.

While Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, had asked the Low Pay Commission (LPC) to consider a lower statutory minimum or exemption for those under 26, Mr Edmonds understood it was now possible it might be applied to under-21-year-olds.

Last week Bill Morris and Ken Jackson, leaders respectively of the Transport and General Workers' Union and the Amalgamated Engineering

and Electrical Union, warned the Government that a White Paper on a union-recognition law would have to meet the movement's aspirations or they would call for an emergency TUC congress.

Yesterday the GMB leader said Treasury briefings and "mood music" from the LPC led him to believe there would be a different statutory minimum wage for young people which would be damaging to their

morale and "in direct contradiction" to the rest of government policy. Later the Unison leader issued a statement repeating its call for a rate of £4.61 an hour "for all workers".

Mr Edmonds said that while there was a case for a lower rate for trainees, everyone on work should receive the same rate. Launching a campaign to dissuade minister from "discriminatory age rates", he said a lower rate for under-26-year-olds was so ridiculous it was not worth discussing; a lower rate for those under 21 would create a feeling of "rage". The union released a MORI poll among 1,000 young people showing that four out of five rejected a lower rate. The GMB has campaigned for a national minimum of more than £4 an hour and most respondents said it should be set at more than £3.50. One in five favoured a minimum in excess of £4.50.

Deal that broke down after request for Blunkett was rejected

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

A LEADING left-of-centre think-tank was asked to try to secure David Blunkett's presence at a public meeting during negotiations over a £20,000 education project, it was claimed last night.

The allegation came as the extent of links between Labour and the lobbying industry were uncovered by *The Independent*. Not only does almost every major political consultancy now employ staff with close links to Labour, but the party's fundraisers have been wooing lobbyists to milk sponsorship from their clients.

The request to bring the Secretary of State for Education into the launch of a joint project between the Fabian Society and the Edexcel Foundation exam board was made by a lobbyist who used to work for Labour.

Paul Wheeler, who at the time worked for a firm called the Public Policy Unit, was helping to negotiate a project including educational research, a series of seminars and an essay competition. However, when he asked the Fabian Society's senior officials if they could secure Mr Blunkett's presence at a public launch with Sir Michael Lickiss, Chairman of Edexcel, the answer was "no".

A Fabian source said last night: "We told them, 'We can't guarantee Blunkett. We are not in that game, and we can't do it anyway.' The deal had broken down for a number of

reasons including the non-involvement of Mr Blunkett, he added.

The Fabian Society has recently issued funding guidelines to its supporters which

state: "The Fabian Society's work frequently involves ministers, advisers or senior Labour Party personnel ... We do not provide access to such figures simply in return for funding. We

are not a lobbying organisation."

Last night, Mr Wheeler said the £20,000 grant had never been contingent on Mr Blunkett's presence. Nor had the collapse of the deal been due to

that aspect. "There were a whole range of people's names mentioned. David Blunkett might have been one of them but I don't think that was very practical and we weren't saying that if David Blunkett doesn't come we are not doing it."

In a letter to Edexcel, the Fabians' general secretary Michael Jacobs said he felt the amount of work involved was not commensurate with the level of sponsorship and the seminar subjects needed more rigorous definition.

Gordon Tempest-Hay, head of corporate affairs for the Edexcel Foundation, said it had no need to offer money for a meeting or appearance, he said.

"It is like sponsoring any conference. You only want to sponsor it if you can get good people coming."



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10 MP backs move to use Diana in seatbelt adverts

SAFETY groups should strive to get the seatbelt-wearing message across "in memory of Princess Diana", a former transport minister said yesterday.

Tory MP Peter Bottomley renewed his calls for a safety campaign after the RAC distanced itself from reports claiming it was behind an advertising campaign based on the princess's death. He said: "We would be betraying her memory if we closed our eyes to what happened in the accident in Paris."

Mr Bottomley was speaking after the RAC refuted any suggestion that it had been planning, or would mount, a seatbelt campaign based on the crash which killed the princess.

But Mr Bottomley said: "Whether or not Diana's name is used or not, it would be good to campaign to reduce deaths caused by the non-wearing of seatbelts."

It is thought that the princess might have survived the Paris death crash last year had she been wearing a rear seatbelt.

On Sunday, the RAC was reported as saying that the public would support the idea of a

seatbelt campaign based on the Paris crash which also killed Dodi Fayed and the car's driver, security man Henri Paul.

However, yesterday, the RAC's David Worslett said: "The RAC wished to make it absolutely clear that reports it intends to run a seatbelt campaign based on the death of the Princess of Wales are untrue. No such campaign is planned or will be mounted."

He added: "In response to questions from the *Sunday Times* earlier this month, an RAC spokesman said that the RAC was aware of proposals by other safety organisations to consider such a campaign."

"The RAC's view was that this would be highly sensitive and would need to depend on the acceptability of such an approach from the public and from the late princess's office. Subsequent reporting by the *Sunday Times* and by the *Daily Mail* seriously misrepresents and misquotes the RAC."

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents had said it feared a campaign would clash with public feeling on

the idea was a "tacky" insult.

First trials of roadside drug-test equipment

ROADSIDE testing for drivers under the influence of drugs began trials in Britain yesterday, writes Louise Jury

Motorists in four areas were stopped and asked to volunteer for the tests which might lead the way to tough new legislation for drivers who use drugs.

Five thousand drivers in Cleveland, Strathclyde, Sussex and Lancashire will be tested over a three-week period to provide valuable information.



in five drivers killed in accidents were under the influence of drugs.

Four different versions of a device called Drugwipe, a pen-type swab which takes sweat from the forehead (pictured), will be used to check for cannabis, cocaine, opiates and amphetamines.

Tests are planned for another device that detects drugs through saliva. Future tests will check the accuracy and reliability of both tests.

Baroness Hayman, the road safety minister, ordered trials after figures showed that one

A break from the norm: A creation by the designer David Robert-Wallis on the first day of Alternative Fashion Week at Spitalfields Market in east London yesterday. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid



Murder trial man visits Zoe grave

A SOLDIER accused of murdering his nine-year-old stepdaughter was yesterday taken to the hillside grave where he is alleged to have buried her.

Miles Evans, 24, an army driver, stood for a few moments - handcuffed to a security guard - at the edge of the disused boulder set on the Battlesbury Hill which overlooks his married quarters home at Warminster, Wiltshire.

The set, where nine-year-old Zoe's naked and decomposing body was found, is ringed by daffodils and primroses - a floral tribute from her school friends.

Pte Evans's visit was part of a formal "view" by the jury from his murder trial at Bristol Crown Court. They were accompanied by the trial judge, Mr Justice Eady, the trial legal team and court officers.

The judge had ordered the visit as part of the trial process. He said that they must visit the area to view the locations they had heard about in evidence.

The prosecution alleges that Pte Evans took his stepdaughter from the home they shared with Zoe's mother, Paula, 29, on the night of 11 January last year and attacked and murdered her. Pte Evans denies the murder.

Zoe's body was found six weeks later after being unearthed by animal activity.

She had suffocated as a result of a piece of clothing being stuffed into her mouth and inhalation of blood after her nose was broken by a severe blow.

The prosecution claims that Evans dropped two "crucial" pieces of evidence - his blue T-shirt and a pair of the girl's knickers which were stained with her blood. They were found by police searchers close to the family home and on a route to the hillside grave.

The trial continues today.

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Legal eagle: Stuart Neame shaking hands with Cherie Booth QC, after yesterday's High Court victory

Photograph:
Peter Macdiarmid



Brewery wins first round in beer tax battle

By Andrew Buncombe

ONE of Britain's oldest and best-known independent brewers yesterday won a vital battle in its attempt to challenge the Government over tax on beer.

In a hearing at the High Court in London lasting no more than one minute, Shepherd Neame was granted the right to take its case to a full hearing at the Court of Appeal.

The brewery's battle to force the Government to reduce duty on beer could ultimately be placed before the European Court of Justice.

In an ironic twist, the brewery's legal battle against the Government was led by Cherie Booth QC, wife of the Prime Minister. She agreed to head

Rates of duty	
Ireland	40p
UK	32p
Netherlands	8p
Belgium	7p
Italy	6p
Portugal	5p
France	5p
Germany	4p

the legal team after Michael Beloff QC was called away to America on business.

Yesterday the Vice Chancellor, Sir Richard Scott, gave the go-ahead for a full hearing without listening to any argument from Shepherd Neame. He said he felt the case could have "constitutional implications".

The brewery believes the Government is in breach of European laws that require

At the heart of the Kent brewery's case is its belief that duty on beer should be the same across Europe.

At the moment there is a broad range of duty, ranging from just a few pence a pint in beer-loving Germany to 40 pence a pint in beer-loving Ireland. In Britain, the Treasury receives 32p on every pint of beer sold in a pub.

Shepherd Neame argues

that this not only hits the brewery directly, but also encourages

drinkers to bulk-buy beer on the Continent where the prices are much cheaper. It said the scourge of cross-Channel bootleggers was well-known.

The brewery believes the Government is in breach of European laws that require

states to harmonise duties across the European Union.

Stuart Neame, vice-chairman of the company, said that

disproportionate rates of duty were severely affecting British brewers.

"One in every 20 pints of beer sold in Britain comes from Calais, but in Kent the figure is one pint in every three," he said.

"Since 1993 when the Treaty of Rome said there should be a harmonisation of duty rates we

have been forced to sell or close 50 of our pubs. Every pub in Kent has lost one quarter of its trade since that date.

"I think the situation is worse in Kent, but it is having a knock-on effect across the

whole of the country." Mr Neame, who said that 600,000 people were employed in public houses, claimed the Government would also lose out on millions of pounds in duty if pubs were forced to shut.

But he added: "The fact that she [Ms Booth] is the Prime Minister's wife has nothing to do with her as the choice to fight the Government over their rates of tax on beer. But the irony is not lost on me."



Targeted: Michael Green, Carlton TV chairman

Rolls-Royce couples robbed of £70,000

TWO WEALTHY couples were robbed of jewellery and watches worth nearly £70,000 after driving home by Rolls-Royce from a night out in London's West End, police said yesterday.

The robbery is the latest in a series of street robberies which have targeted the rich and famous in London.

Last week, the former editor of the *Daily Mail* City pages, Sir Patrick Sargeant, was attacked and robbed as he re-

turned home with his wife, whose £30,000 diamond ring stolen. Previous victims have included Carlton TV boss Michael Green and Formula One tycoon Bernie Ecclestone.

The middle-aged victims of the latest "Rolex robbery", whom police refused to name, were attacked as they arrived at the home of one of the couples in Finchley, north London, after visiting an upmarket club.

They were approached by

four masked men as they climbed out of the car, owned by one of the couples, near Regent's Park Road, early on Sunday morning.

Police said the robbers threatened the four before removing three gold and diamond rings from the fingers of the women, a diamond necklace, a Rolex watch and a Vacheron Constantine watch, as well as £200 cash.

Leaving their victims

shocked but unharmed, the suspects, aged 25-30, escaped in a gold-coloured hatchback with a licence plate that may have been G 14. "It is essential that we trace this gang before they strike again," said PC Dave Turner, one of the officers investigating the attack.

Police are appealing for witnesses, and think the victims could have been followed from the club, although they said they were keeping an open mind.

In September, three men

and a woman were sentenced to a total of 24 years' custody for snatching expensive watches

and jewellery in a series of raids. Knightsbridge Crown Court was told that street robbers fell after the arrests.

But it is clear that other

gangs spring up to replace those convicted.

As the convicted four were awaiting sentencing, another gang entered the celebrity launch of Antony Worrall Thompson's restaurant, Woz, in Notting Hill and ripped a woman's Rolex from her arm.



Targeted: Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone

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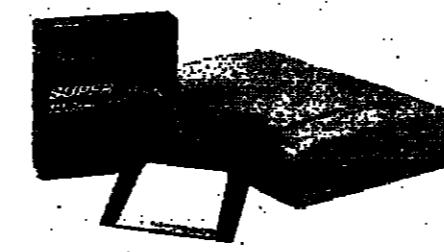
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Clinton wins over African brothers and sisters

By Mary Braid
in Accra

"WHAT is wrong with the brother?" asked a puzzled Ghanaian as the flustered young black American – part of the 800-strong entourage accompanying Bill Clinton on the first tour of Africa by an American President – raced up and down.

The brother was dressed for Wall Street. Half an hour in the blazing Ghanaian sun, waiting for Mr Clinton to launch the eleven-day tour, and he was soaked to the waist, his expensive shirt, tie and braces ruined.

The brother needed to chill out. US crowd control in Ghana? It is almost a contradiction in terms. No one would stand where the Wall Street mannequin ordered; Ghanaians clearly lacked the American sense of order. Three hours in and already this mania? They were taking bets on the chances of him having a heart attack before Uganda – the second stop on this six-country tour.

"He is a relative and he is welcome," shouted a man from the back to laughter. "But we must teach him how to behave in Ghana."

Yesterday Ghana welcomed President Clinton on behalf of a downtrodden, poverty-ridden continent at the start of a tour which Africa hopes will change its fortunes. Despite the presence of the huge White House team – 600 political aides and businessmen and 200 Washington-based journalists – Ghana did it its way and what a show this West African nation put on.

From the early hours tens of thousands streamed out of Accra's ghettos and in from the countryside to line the streets and fill Independence Square for a visit which Mr Clinton later admitted was long overdue.

Traditional chiefs swathed in colourful tent cloth arrived on horseback bringing their own thrones to sit on and massive cloth canopies for shade. The drums began and dancers took to the stage for a display executed with precision timing. Hillary Clinton's head bobbed; Bill's toes were tapping. The re-

sponse from a crowd who had waited for hours in 40C heat was rapturous. They came seeking hope and that was what the President gave them. "Our hundred years from now our grandchildren and mine will look back and say this was the beginning of an African Renaissance," he promised, saying the US believed the face of Africa had changed in the past decade.

Dictators were being replaced and half of sub-Saharan Africa's 48 nations now chose their own governments. Mr Clinton said it was time for "Americans to put a new Africa on our map".

He was more upbeat about the continent's prospects than many analysts, but he hedged his bets. It was early days. Democracy had not taken a permanent foothold even in the countries he was visiting.

But the Clinton visit reflects the West's softening attitude to democracy in Africa. Governments speak more of good governance and respect for human rights than multi-party elections. Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings, sharing the platform with President Clinton, came to power through the barrel of a gun. But he has since been democratically elected. "If he had not staged a coup when he did, who else could have held Ghana together," asks a supporter. "Whether he came through the window or not, he is leaving by the front door. I think the West is beginning to appreciate these issues."

There is no end of speculation about the reasons for Clinton's visit to a continent which the world's last superpower previously considered unworthy of a visit. Yesterday the President said that the US had good reason to help Africa, for one in 10 Americans traced their roots there. "Let us find the future here in Africa," Clinton said. "The cradle of humanity."

It is 40 years since Ghana became the first African country to win independence from European colonial masters. Then socialism was the panacea of the day. Today, Africa is fed stringent economic structural readjustment programmes and



Big crust: Clinton shouting for the crowd to keep back in Accra

Photograph: AP

A RELUCTANT DEMOCRAT

PRESIDENT Jerry Rawlings, Ghana's charismatic leader, is the offspring of a Ghanaian mother and Scottish chemist, who never acknowledged him as his son.

He came to power in 1979 as a young flight lieutenant after staging a military coup. He handed over Ghana to a civilian president, but two years later, again took power by force.

The early years were marked by repression and it was the 1990s before Rawlings moved towards democracy. Nevertheless he has proved popular at the polls.

Mr Rawlings' conversion to democracy will be contested in two years at elections he is barred from contesting. His wife, Nana, is a contender to replace him.

— Mary Braid

Netanyahu to face US peace challenge

By Patrick Cockburn
in Jerusalem

AMERICA is to try once again to move forward the deep-sunken Middle East process by putting forward a plan for Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank.

Dennis Ross, the US peace envoy, is to travel to Israel at the end of the week to unveil the American proposals to the Israeli government which include a pull back of 13.1 per cent, more than Israel is prepared to offer but far less than the Palestinians expected to get under a peace treaty signed three years ago.

In the wake of the Iraq crisis in February, when the US found that failure to put pressure on Israel undermined its alliance with the Arab states against Saddam Hussein, there are signs of greater US urgency in mediating between Israel and the Palestinians. Kofi Annan, the UN secretary general, yesterday arrived in Gaza for a meeting with Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, though not bearing his own peace proposals.

In a surprising development, the Israeli press says the US will set up a joint committee with the Palestinians to monitor the expansion of Israeli settlement. The *Daily Haaretz* says this is the first time the Americans will have set up a joint forum with the Palestinians to observe the growth of Israeli settlements. It says there will be nothing on set-

tlements in the US initiative, but that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, has agreed in principle that Israel will give a letter to the US or Jordan saying it will reduce settlement activity.

The Israeli cabinet has objected strongly to the figure of 13.1 per cent for the next stage of its withdrawal. At the heart of the disagreement is the accord signed by Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli prime minister assassinated in 1995, which would have effectively given control of the West Bank to the Palestinians. Mr Netanyahu is determined to prevent the development of a *de facto* Palestinian state by limiting their control to urban enclaves.

Ghassan Khatib, a Palestinian commentator, says Mr Arafat's willingness to accept the US proposals may largely be because he expects Israel to reject them and wants to win friends in Washington. He says the danger for the Palestinians is that the US compromise is undermining the treaty the Palestinians signed in 1995. He says: "They should compromise on what is already a compromise."

Mr Khatib argues that a weakness of the Palestinian position is that their leaders act as if there was no alternative to the peace process, which has so far been "useful to Israel, but not the Palestinians". He says the problem is that "Palestinian officials are developing a vested interest in the present situation."

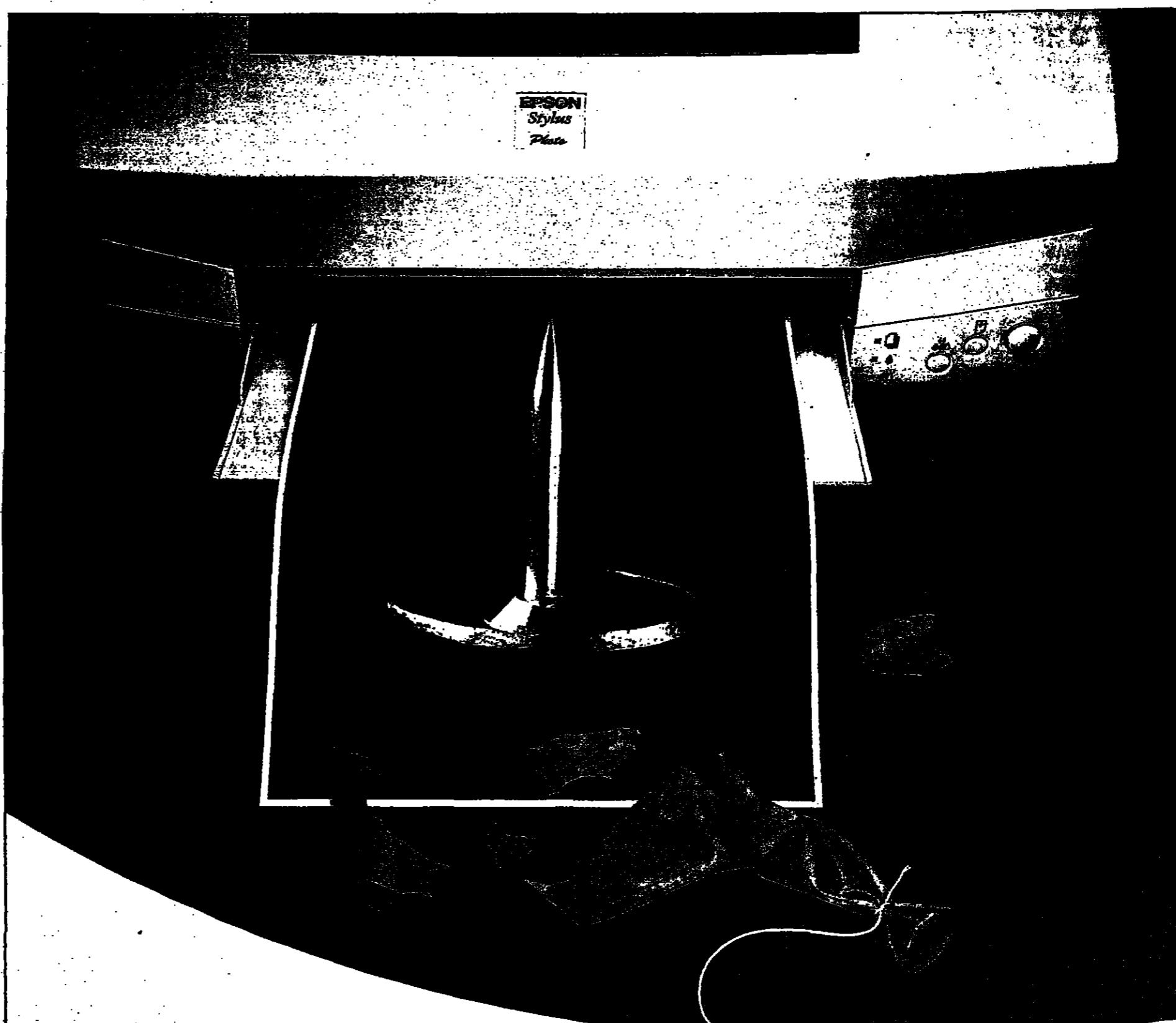
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Set-back for NF as Le Pen fails to win regional post

By John Lichfield
in Paris

THE LEADER of the far-right National Front, Jean-Marie Le Pen, yesterday failed in his attempt to scramble over the rubble of the French centre-right into the presidency of the third most populous region of the third most populous region of France.

His defeat, which allowed a Socialist to take over the government of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, was the first set-back for the Front after eight days of victories which have left France's "traditional" right in ruins. How serious a defeat it was is unclear. It may be that the NF never really expected Mr Le Pen to be

regional president. The xenophobic and ultra-nationalist party made the demand, partly to satisfy its own supporters, and partly to show who would be the real boss in a possible new alliance of the far right.

However, the momentum of the National Front was certainly checked. The NF leader had asked rebellious members of the centre-right parties to vote for him when the regional assembly for greater Provence met in Marseilles yesterday. He

pointed out that in five other regions last Friday NF councillors had elected five centre-right presidents (against the orders of the leaders of their own parties). The political bill for that support was due, he said.

To muddle the situation even more, Mr Le Pen took his revenge by calling for the resignation of the former defence minister, Charles Millon, one of the centre-right rebels elected with NF support in the Rhônes-Alpes region last week. All in all, the day's events had the hallmark of a clumsy return to the petulant wrecking strategies associated with Mr Le Pen; the gains of recent days were based on the more softly-softly approach long advocated by his number two, Bruno Mégret.

A sixth region, Upper Normandy, fell to a rebel centre-right politician with NF support yesterday. There were set-backs for the NF in two other areas however.

In the greater Paris region, the Ile-de-France, a Socialist president seemed likely to be elected after centre-right councillors refused to accept NF support. In Midi-Pyrénées, a centre-right president was elected with NF votes but immediately resigned on principle.

There was no disguising, none the less, the disarray of the traditional right, split between a faction willing to deal with the NF and a faction refusing deals. President Jacques Chirac, still the titular leader of the centre-right, was to make a televised appeal last night to his supporters, and to France, to refuse all appeasement of ultra-nationalism and racism.

Blair goes native in address to Assembly

By John Lichfield

TONY BLAIR will become the first British Prime Minister to address the French National Assembly today and will, as expected, speak in French. Mr Blair is said to have been working on the speech for some time. He is writing it in English but it will be translated before he addresses the lower house of the French parliament this afternoon.

The theme has not been divulged but he is expected to speak about his reform plans for Britain and about Britain's relationship with Europe. It is possible he will make some response to the remarks made by the French finance minister, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, on television at the weekend, in which he said Britain could not be a leading player in

the European Union while remaining outside the single currency. This comment has been interpreted in the British press as a snub; in France, it is seen as a statement of the obvious.

The French public has been pleased by the Prime Minister's command of their language in the brief television interviews he has given since he came to office last year. Mr Blair worked in France as a student and has spent several recent family holidays in the south west of the country.

He will be only the fifth foreign head of state or government ever to address the National Assembly. His predecessors are the King Juan Carlos of Spain, President Clinton, King Hassan II of Morocco and the Italian Prime Minister, Romano Prodi. All but President Clinton spoke in French.



Victory salute: A Serbian woman is guided away from a sidestreet during a march through the Kosovo capital Pristina yesterday. Photograph: David Rose

Defiant Serbs vow to keep Kosovo

By Steve Crawshaw
in Pristina

TENS of thousands of Serbs demonstrated yesterday in Pristina, capital of the province of Kosovo, as Albanian secessionist feelings continue to grow.

"We will give up our lives – but we will never give up Kosovo," chanted the protesters, who waved Serb flags, sang national songs, and showed the three-fingered Serb salute.

Albanians, who form a 90 per cent majority in the Serb ruled province, feel they are the victims. Under the rule of Slobodan Milošević they have been

stripped of many of the rights that they previously enjoyed.

Police brutality has become frequent. Dozens of Albanians, including women and children, were killed recently by Serb forces in massacres in the Drenica region, west of Kosovo's capital, Pristina.

But the Serbs feel themselves a beleaguered minority and fear that Kosovo – "the heart of Serbia", as many slogans yesterday described it – may be slipping away. The Serbs say they are ready to fight to stop that happening.

One target of the protesters' anger was a concession by the Serb authorities in Pristina, which yesterday agreed

to let ethnic Albanian students resume university places.

In recent years the Albanians have, in effect, been banned from higher education. Many Albanians feel that the new agreement does not go far enough. But Serbs fear that it is the thin end of the wedge, and could be the first of many Serb retreats.

Albanians mostly stayed off the streets of Pristina, fearing violence. In the event, the march passed off almost entirely peacefully.

Albanians and Serbs alike share the deception – only partly justified by reality – that the world is ready to come to the Albanians' aid. Slogans yester-

day criticised the American "support for terrorism", a reference to the fact that Robert Gelbard, the United States' special envoy to the Balkans, has had sympathetic talks with the main Albanian leader, Ibrahim Rugova, and because Western politicians have sharply criticised the recent Serb crackdown.

There was a large turn-out for unofficial elections the Albanians held in Kosovo on Sunday, which returned Mr Rugova as president of the unrecognised republic of Kosovo. Although Serbia declared the elections were illegal, the authorities did not prevent them from taking place.

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Marys and Christs contemplate their fate after millennial drama

IN THE rocco splendour of Pilate's House, I spy Jesus Christ conducting a wedding ceremony. The captain of the Roman legion trundles past in the mayor's car, spraying tourists and apostles with stush. Upon the snowy peaks rising above the clouds, the other Jesus watches over us. He is the head of the mountain-rescue service in real life, if there is such a thing in this alpine Beverly Hills.

Since 1633, when the people of Oberammergau vowed to stage, every 10 years, the Passion play about the life and death of Jesus if God spared them from the plague, the German village has grown into a biblical theme park. Almost all the 5,000 inhabitants have some role in the drama, enacted through spring and summer in front of half a million visitors and an immense global television audience. The baker, the wood-carver and the ski instructor – all are international celebrities.

For the main players, stardom can exact a heavy price. Jesus the registrar – an uncommonly handsome man – has trouble fighting off women. Pilates never regain their popularity. Marys are prone to nervous breakdowns, and the villagers would rather not talk about the tragic fate that befell Judas. "You cannot help being transformed by the role," said a local. All previous Christs have had to go co-directory because of constant pestering on the telephone by their not-so-meeek fans, especially devotees in Britain.

THE famous open-air theatre with its expansive stage is being made ready for the next cycle in 2000. The orchestra is having problems, though. Every member must come from Oberammergau, but the past decade has seen a lean harvest of oboists and bassoonists. The talent-scouters who sift through residents aged three and over have

oberammergau diary



Imre Karacs

somewhat overlooked these two instruments. Mercifully, there is a good supply of angelic voices for the choir. Tradition dictates that on Ash Wednesday a year from now, male members of the cast must begin to grow their hair and beard. Oberammergau will mutate into a hippy commune, although peace and love might be in short supply. Families will be pitted against one another in the scramble for the starring roles. There are two players for every big act, taking turns through the season of 100 performances.

As the time of selection approaches, centuries-old feuds are rekindled and evil tongues

wag. The whispering campaign has already begun. "Both Johns were awful the last time," says an ambitious mother. "One couldn't act, and the other was as ugly as the Black Death."

THE second coming is imminent. Everyone seems certain that the hunky registrar will still have his cross to bear into the next millennium, while one of the two Mary Magdalenes is a hot tip for promotion to Mary. But sheer talent is no guarantee of success. Casting is in the power of the village council, and to explain how someone becomes a Joseph and not Judas, we must make a detour into the jungle of local politics.

Councillors spend all their time discussing the minutiae of the Passion play, and are split nearly among fundamentalist-modernist lines. Supporters of the young modernist director, Christian Stückl, command seven seats. Mr Stückl, who now does this sort of thing for a living in Munich after his acclaimed production of the play in 1990, had to sue for a new contract. The villagers are with him, but the biggest block of councillors are in the thrall of the arch-conservatives.

MODERNITY is the catchword of the new production – Dr Zwick's friends permitting. Because of an European Union ruling, long-term Muslim and Protestant residents must be included for the first time. The text of the six-hour play has been reworked and brought up to date, but do not look for words such as "cool" in the script. The director is restricted to the vocabulary of the Bible. He wants to make Jesus a stronger character than before. "All Christ does after lunch in the original script is say goodbye to everybody," Mr Stückl complains. "The new Jesus sounds like an instructor of religious education," Dr Zwick retorts.

The new version will have three crowd scenes – a vast tableau of 1,000 actors under the towering cliffs – instead of two at present. Mr Stückl promises to fill a gaping dramatic hole which opened up after lingering anti-Semitic slurs were banished in 1970. In the current 19th-century Passion play, Christ is betrayed by the Jewish – money-changers of the temple. When this passage was excised, the audience could no longer work out what shopped Jesus and why. According to the new twist... No, that would be telling. All will be revealed in May 2000. As a millennial experience, it should beat the hell out of a certain Dome.



Waiting stage: In 1633, the people of Oberammergau vowed to perform the Passion play every 10 years.

Shock as architect of reform is sacked

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

AS THE smoke cleared after Boris Yeltsin's astonishing government shake-up yesterday, one figure stood out against the charred political landscape.

Finally, after so many premature obituaries, Viktor Chernomyrdin was departing the field, ending a career as prime minister which began at the dawn of Russia's faltering economic reforms. The replacement of the 59-year-old premier by a man more than two decades younger came as a shock to the outside world, where he was widely seen as a pillar of stability amid Russia's erratic efforts to convert itself into a Western-style economy.

For years, readers of the *ruins* in Moscow have wrongly forecast his demise. But his abrupt exit in favour of 35-year-old Sergei Kiriyenko was foreseen by almost no one. Mr Yeltsin was supposed to be operating at half-strength, recovering from yet another bout of illness. And Russia was, by its standards, enjoying a period of calm.

Whether Mr Kiriyenko will now be called on to try to maintain that calm on a permanent basis is unclear. Although he is favoured by the Kremlin, it is uncertain if his appointment will be confirmed in parliament. Recently appointed as fuel and energy minister, he is better known for his friendship with Boris Nemtsov, one of Mr Yeltsin's more ardent reformers.

Yet his arrival is likely to be seen in the West as a sign that the President's pledge to press on with reforms is sincere.

When Mr Chernomyrdin was appointed just over five years ago, the international reaction resounded with the sound of sucking teeth. He was seen as a Soviet dinosaur, an energy baron with little love for the free-market economics of Anatoly Chubais, the First Deputy Prime Minister who was also dismissed yesterday, but is expected to stay in the President's team.

But he departs office with a different reputation. Although Western financial institutions

generally preferred the hardline market economics of the Kremlin's misnamed 'young reformers', the prime minister's stolid presence became a source of reassurance. He was also seen as one of the few senior officials capable of negotiating with the Communist and nationalist opposition. Yet he was frequently portrayed as a dull technocrat, a verbose plodder who was better suited to trotting doggedly behind the flamboyant Yeltsin than occupying the Kremlin himself.

This reputation has clung to him despite copious efforts to make himself more interesting, by appearing on television playing the accordion, riding a jet-ski, guffawing with laughter at his own "Splitting Images" style puppet and negotiating live on air for the release of hundreds of Russians taken hostage during the Chechen war.

His dismissal is unlikely to mark the end of his political ambitions. Boris Yeltsin has long been rumoured to see him as his successor, although, while lavishing praise on his loyal minister yesterday, the President was ambiguous on this front yesterday. Yet Mr Chernomyrdin remains high on the list of Kremlin contenders. Nor - given Mr Yeltsin's unpredictable nature - is his come-back to be ruled out.

He has a formidable political arsenal. A former head of the oil monopoly, Gazprom, he is the chieftain of the powerful energy lobby. He has great personal wealth. And he has considerable political cunning, honed by five years of Kremlin intrigues. If he can secure the support of the ruling élite as a compromise candidate, he will continue to be a contendee to be reckoned with.

His term in office will scarcely go down in history as Russia's brightest hour. He will be rightly praised for presiding over an administration that has stabilised the rouble, brought inflation under control, and halted the sharp downward spiral of the economy. But his administration's failures outweigh its triumphs.

Promise after promise to pay vast wage and pensions arrears have proved worthless. The



Decisive action: The Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, explaining to the nation, in a television address yesterday, the reasons why he had sacked the entire cabinet

Photograph: Reuters

country's finances, shackled by continuing problems over tax collection and a gargantuan welfare state, remain precarious. Corruption has continued unabated. Defeat in the Chechen war remains a scar in the national memory. Squabbles between the more ruthless free-market, bankers, and advocates of a gradual approach abounded unchecked. Too lit-

tle of the money that swirls around Moscow has found its way into Russia's regions.

Mr Yeltsin's declaration yesterday that the current cabinet "could not cope with a number of key questions" and that "many people do not feel the changes for the better" will have set heads nodding in agreement over all 11 time zones of his vast country.

Kenyan police fight battles with rioting students

Kenyan police and university students fought pitched battles yesterday in the capital's worst violence since civic unrest ahead of elections last year.

Police in Nairobi fired bullets and dozens of tear gas shells at hundreds of university students protesting against the shrinking buying power of their education loans, witnesses said. President Daniel arap Moi won re-election last year following months of civic unrest - in which many students participated - over constitutional changes.

— Reuters, Nairobi

Pope winds up Nigeria visit

Winding up his three-day trip to Nigeria, the Pope told three-quarters of a million pilgrims at a mass on the outskirts of the capital Abuja, that the church preached justice and love and insisted on duties as well as rights, of citizens, employers, employees and government. The Pope has used the visit to put pressure on Nigeria's military rulers to free political detainees and improve the state of human rights.

— Reuters, Abuja

Wild boar kills shepherd

A wild boar killed a shepherd after he tried to chase it away from his flock. The boar eluded the shepherd's dogs and attacked the man, mauling his leg. The 24-year-old died to death near Cetate in northwestern Romania. Wild boars are common in Romania, but they generally do not attack people.

— AP, Bucharest

New Yorkers not oversexed

Single New Yorkers are not addicted to sex. A new survey found most have never had a one-night stand and the average number of lifetime partners is a mere five.

The survey found that 53 percent of 1,000 single New Yorkers between 21 and 40 said they had never had a one-night stand.

Hacker suspect stays silent

The Israeli teenager accused of being the computer hacker "Analyzer" has stopped cooperating with police, his lawyer said yesterday. Amnon Zichroni said his client, Ehud Tenenbaum, had not realised how seriously the authorities would take the allegations against him.

— AP, Jerusalem

'They didn't show Swan Lake, so it can't have been a coup'



All change: Out (from left), PM Chernomyrdin, first deputy PM Chubais and interior minister Kulikov. In, Kiriyenko (right) is first deputy PM, acting PM

10.30AM. I was preparing to go and make my tax declaration when the telephone rang. It was my friend Vitaly. "Have you heard? Yeltsin has sacked the entire government and is taking over himself." "But he's been ill." "I think this might be a coup." I cancelled the appointment with the taxman.

A putsch, yes, it was certainly possible. The night before, General Alexander Lebed had been shown on independent television commenting during a visit to the United States that President Boris Yeltsin was "inadequate". But when I switched on the television, I was relieved to see a morning game show, not the ballet *Swan Lake*, which suddenly appeared on every channel when hardliners attempted to overthrow Mikhail Gorbachev in August 1991. At 11.30, up came an unscheduled news bulletin. If they were still informing the public, matters could not be too serious.

The bulletin raised more questions than it answered. On the one hand Mr Yeltsin had removed Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, on the other he had given him a medal "for services to the Motherland, second degree." Two ministers seemed to be more sacked than the others: first deputy prime minister, Anatoly Chubais, and interior minister, Anatoly Kulikov, were definitely out while others remained. It was a suggestion that other ministers might continue in post until a new cabinet was formed.

"It's typically Russian," said Vitaly. "This is going to turn into a farce."

Brokers were not amused when the stock exchange plunged by 10 per cent. Shocked Western journalists and Russians alike began speculating what it all meant. The sacking of Mr Chubais was understandable. By removing the economic reformer accused of receiving an excessive book advance while failing to pay ordinary people their overdue wages and pensions, President Yeltsin was taking the sting out

of a nationwide protest planned for 9 April. The sacking of General Kulikov made less sense. True, he was one of the hardliners who gave President Yeltsin bad advice about pressing on with the war in Chechnya. But it seemed he had weathered that storm. Lately he had been responsible for cracking down on economic crime. On the other hand, if Mr Yeltsin wanted a scapegoat for public discontent over Mafia violence, he would do nicely.

At noon, the President appeared on television to ask for the "understanding and support of the Russian people". Although the country had made some economic progress, many social problems remained. A fresh team was needed. Yet he had nothing but warm words for Mr Chernomyrdin, whose "human decency" would be needed in 2000 when the presidential elections were due. He had asked Mr Chernomyrdin "to concentrate on political preparations for those elections". Did this mean Mr Yeltsin, 67, was giving Mr Chernomyrdin, 59, his blessing to run for president? Or was it that the latter was being told to organise another election campaign for Mr Yeltsin who has been hinting lately that he might bend the constitution and try to run for a third term?

In the only actual appointment of the day, Sergei Kiriyenko, was made first deputy prime minister and asked to act as prime minister. Under the constitution, if the president dies the prime minister automatically takes over. If anything were to happen to Mr Yeltsin in the next few days, Russia would be in the hands of Mr Kiriyenko, a completely inexperienced politician who is under 40.

THE INDEPENDENT

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Rich and poor flee Indonesia's turmoil

By Stephen Vines
in Hong Kong

DESPERATE for work, poor Indonesians are paying smugglers to pack them into leaky boats which will secretly dispose their human cargo in Malaysia and Singapore. Meanwhile, the rich Indonesians, particularly those from the ethnic Chinese community, are slipping out on Cathay Pacific jets for Hong Kong.

"We don't know what's going to happen," one Indonesian Chinese businessman staying in Hong Kong said. "The situation is too unstable." The businessman, who still has most of his assets in Indonesia, declines to be named. He added: "It means taking my children out of school but if they stay, their safety is at risk."

The boat people are paying around £100 a head to be smuggled out. The jet people are spending far more on their so-

journ in Hong Kong. Many have residences overseas and they all have overseas bank accounts. The seriously wealthy, such as the Riady family, own companies in Hong Kong and have long been commuters between there and Indonesia.

Anti-Chinese riots and the government's refusal to support the Chinese community have prompted well-off Chinese families to go abroad, at least temporarily. They are hedging their bets by maintaining businesses back home, while shoveling as much money as possible overseas.

The poor, squeezed between rising unemployment and hyper-inflation, see no prospect of earning enough money at home. They must give the little they have to the human cargo smugglers, and they face appalling risks on arrival.

At the weekend, a special court sitting in Singapore dealt with 300 illegal immigrants and



El Nino effect: Davi Yanomami, the Brazilian Indian chief and UN Global prize holder, fighting a fire in the Demini Indian area of Roraima state. Photograph: APP

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الراحل من

Memories of carnage that stop a revolution

EVEN after 33 years, Jamari the carpenter remembers the names of all the people who died, but above all he remembers Mas Karni, who was hiding in the cemetery when the mob arrived.

Apart from being an active communist, Karni was secretary of the parish council, and somebody in the East Java village of Sumurup had a grudge against him. When the young Muslim men arrived, Mas Karni's enemies told them where to look.

"They brought him here," says Jamari, pointing to a worn stone by the side of the road. "and I was an eyewitness. They beat him with sticks and then held him up and cut his throat with a machete. He was a very kind man; even if he was a communist, he never seemed like a threat to anyone."

Another man was killed on the same day, and later the mob came back and murdered two others. Over the next few weeks, five other suspected members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) were taken away by soldiers, never to be seen again.

That was 1965, but even amid Indonesia's present suffering and confusion, the killings of the village communists have never receded into Sumurup's past. "We are suffering badly from the economic crisis and people here are very angry," says Jamari. "What people want is a new president but they are afraid that if we are vocal, the army will take us away and kill us. We are afraid 1965 will happen all over again."

East Java, a green, mountainous region of rice fields, jungles and volcanoes, does not look like a troubled place. But over the years it has borne more than its share of Indonesia's suffering. The Asian currency crisis combined with an exceptionally low rainfall, have caused the cost of rice to double, and villagers in Sumurup have been reduced to mixing their rice with cassava, traditional food of the very poor. A month ago there were riots in many towns, apparently provoked by rising prices.

Among progressive religious leaders and politicians, there is talk of a people's uprising along the lines of the popular movements which brought an end to the dictatorships of the Philippines and South Korea. But to older Indonesians like Jamari the notion of mass unrest suggests other images so fearful as to stifle immediately the rebellious impulses - the memories of 1965.

In October of that year, General Suharto took his first step to power after quashing an apparent coup attempt by rival officers against the first president, Sukarno. The mutiny was blamed immediately on the Indonesian Communist Party

Fear of a return to bloodshed keeps Suharto in power, writes Richard Lloyd Parry

(PKI) and a dreadful purge ensued. "The anti-PKI massacres in Indonesia rank as one of the worst mass murders of the 20th century," a CIA analyst wrote a few years later. The numbers of victims are estimated anywhere between 100,000 to over a million.

More than 30 years later, people fear that history could repeat itself - a notion that is subtly encouraged by the government which, has cracking down on its opponents over the last two years, on the pretext of clamping down on resurgent communists.

In 1996, riots in Jakarta were implausibly blamed on the



President Suharto: Ruling Golkar party is all-powerful

People's Democratic Party (PRD), a small liberal democratic group of students and workers; more than a dozen of its members were tried and imprisoned for the capital crime of subversion. Three more PRD members were arrested this month, and three anti-government activists have gone missing. Earlier this year, the army even announced the discovery of a makeshift bomb-making factory run by the PRD in Jakarta. Diplomats here regard it as a crude pretext fabricated by the army.

The fear engendered by such tactics serves the government well. Even though almost no one has a good word to say about President Suharto, his ruling party, Golkar, achieves near-unanimous victories in elections. "We have no choice," says Jamari, "we are weak, so there can be no political life apart from Golkar."

Among the ruling party's leaders is a man whom Jamari recognises - a Muslim preacher who is now a Golkar politician. His political career began in November 33 years ago, when he led the mob which cut the throat of Mas Karni.

Bones of contention

Just like many of her contemporaries, teenage model Kirsty Ashcroft may not be getting the calcium she needs. Glenda Cooper reports

FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD Kirsty Ashcroft may see her face on the cover of teen magazines and model for Paul Smith but in some ways she is very ordinary. Ashcroft is like many of her less famous contemporaries – who have just voted her teen magazine Sugar's "Face of 1998" – she hates eating cheese.

Doctors are worried that teenage girls could be putting themselves at risk of the bone-thinning disease osteoporosis by not getting enough calcium. Osteoporosis is a major public-health problem, with 40 per cent of women sustaining an osteoporotic fracture at some time in their lives. Adolescence is a crucial time for bone mineral acquisition but health experts fear the desire to diet means that girls are avoiding calcium-rich foods such as milk because they think they are fattening.

Kirsty gets her calcium from "lots and lots" of yoghurt. She does her best to eat healthily. "My mum is always on me to eat at least four pieces of fruit a day." But last week a new survey warned that teenage girls are putting their health at risk by skimping on meals, afraid that they are overweight.

More than six out of 10 girls aged 14 to 15 years old say they would like to lose weight, although only 15 per cent weigh too much for their weight and height. On the other hand, boys of the same age have a more realistic attitude. Just over a quarter said they would like to lose weight; just under one in five were overweight.

But the survey, carried out by the Schools Health Education Unit, found that girls are skipping meals to try to lose weight and by the time they reach 15 years old, more than three out of 10 girls are missing breakfast or just have a drink and one in seven does not eat lunch.

"Sometimes I think girls do worry too much about what they look like," says Ashcroft who is 5ft 6in and weighs 8.5st. "I think they look at skinny models in magazines and want to be like them." She says she is lucky to have an agency that does not pressurise her about her weight.

"Girls want to be tall and slim," says Alison Graham of the National Osteoporosis Society. "But what they are not aware of is that dieting can lead to the risk of fragile bones. This is very deforming for the figure, but we are increasingly seeing girls in their twenties with fractures in their spine and they can lose up to a few inches in height."

"It's deforming your body. It's difficult for teenagers to look ahead but we must encourage them that the teenage years are critical for bone development. By the age of 20, you have laid down 97 per cent of your skeleton's bone strength."

A study reported in the *British Medical Journal* looked at the effect on drinking more milk in adolescence. Researchers from Sheffield asked more than 80 girls aged 12 at four different city schools to drink an extra half-pint of milk a day for 18 months. They found the girls did not put on or lose weight, or grow any faster, but their bone mineral density was "significantly greater" than in a similar group of girls who consumed their usual diet. The researchers concluded that a modest increase in milk consumption could have a "substantial" impact in the incidence of future fractures.

Teenagers need 1000mg of calcium today – two thirds of a pint of milk. But confront your average weight-conscious teen with a

pint of milk and the chances are she won't want to drink it. "It is difficult," says Graham. "We are all aware of this. A national survey of school children's diets, conducted by the Department of Health (DoH), showed the average calcium intake of adolescent girls is falling – almost 20 per cent were so low that if they were maintained at this level they were unlikely to be adequate.

"It's difficult because you can't see bones, but we have got to get the message across. One of the ways to do so, nutritionists think, is to point out alternatives to full-fat milk. Low-fat varieties of milk, cheese and yoghurt are as rich in calcium as full-fat varieties".

"If it is a problem, girls should switch to skimmed milk," says Wynne Chan of the British Nutrition Foundation. "That will do you just as much good. You need about a pint of milk a day in your teenage years to get enough calcium."

Isabel Skypala, head of dietetics at the Royal Brompton Hospital and author of *What Are You Eating?*, says there are many ingenious ways to get your teen to eat enough calcium. "It's a question of looking," she says. "You can always try things like yoghurt, because they are low fat and easy to eat. Breakfast cereal is also a good idea, because many are fortified with vitamins and minerals like calcium and, of course, you pour milk on top.

"It's difficult, because teenagers skip



'Sugar' cover girl Kirsty (right and above) hates eating cheese. Photographs: Martin Rickert, Jackie Pickersill

meals and then they go out and have takeaways, so you have to think about the food that they like to eat."

"People are unaware that bread, particularly fortified bread, has a fair amount of calcium, as does pizza. A pasta dish with cheese is a good source and with all of these it isn't like you are pushing them to eat something calcium-rich and obviously 'good for them'."

"Other good sources of calcium include green vegetables, such as spinach, but you will be hard-pushed to get many teenagers to eat them as they don't come across as terribly exciting."

For odd treats mothers may be relieved to hear that their daughters can get 65mg in a choc iced or 55mg in a hot-cross bun or even in good shape."

100mg in four fish fingers. "Obviously you wouldn't want them to be living on them," says Dr Skypala, "but they can all contribute to your daily intake."

The other important way for girls to improve bone strength is to exercise – but many are like Ashcroft, who says: "I don't really exercise at all. I used to try to go swimming at my local leisure centre, but I don't go that often."

"It is so important to take regular exercise," says Graham. "Girls should particularly try to take exercise that is load bearing on your bones, such as running, jogging or aerobics. The more impact you put on your bones the greater the strength. I cannot emphasise how important it is to get your bones in good shape."

It's deforming your body. It's difficult for teenagers to look ahead but we must encourage them that the teenage years are critical for bone development. By the age of 20, you have laid down 97 per cent of your skeleton's bone strength."

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100mg in four fish fingers. "Obviously you wouldn't want them to be living on them," says Dr Skypala, "but they can all contribute to your daily intake."

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REVELATIONS:
GORDON RAMSAY

Out of air, time and his depth

The time: 1992
The place: St Thomas – Caribbean
The man: Gordon Ramsay – Michelin-starred Chef and former footballer

AT 25 I was taking some serious time out, after intensive training in Paris with renowned chefs, Guy Savoy and Joel Robuchon. My head felt stuffed. So I accepted a job on a private yacht which at 75ft was like a floating Dorchester. I was hired to cook for the owners and their occasional guests, and with three in the kitchen I couldn't believe how easy it was.

When we arrived at St Thomas, I became obsessed with diving. I found it difficult living in a confined space and it is a very physical sport. I was doing two tank dives during the day and after dinner would do a night dive off the back of the boat. We would take torches and flares and sneak off without them knowing.

One day we went on a specialist dive down about 28 metres to watch sharks at a shipwreck. To get there we had to swim through two decks. The deeper into the boat the darker it became.

Unfortunately, I managed to drop my torch and as I dived down to try and catch it, my buoyancy jacket became trapped in my emergency breathing apparatus and I found myself jammed up against a pipe on the roof of this wreck. I had to try and remove the jacket which was a frightening and daunting task. I came very close to blowing it.

While I tried to free the emergency regulator, I caught the tubes for my tank somewhere and I was losing air and finding it incredibly hard to breathe.

For a few seconds I had to take off my mouth-piece. Lots of thoughts were flashing through my mind. I remembered the three bodybags which were loaded when we stopped at Gibraltar! A picture of my mother came next. I'm very close to her and I wondered what she would say if she could see me now and the huge mess I'd got myself into. My death would have destroyed her. Half my friends didn't even know where I was.

Untangling the tubes to my tank so I could maintain breathing wasn't the end of my problems. By taking off the

If sharks stop moving they die. I'm sure I'm like that too

buoyancy jacket I floated up towards the roof of the cabin and the right-hand side of my arm and my neck hit the ceiling which was covered with fire coral. It is like putting your hand into a naked flame and even through my wet suit I could feel it.

Finally, I struggled back into the jacket and with the extra weight floated down off the ceiling. It was still important for me to control my breathing because the more anxious you become, the more oxygen you use and with quite a deep dive we had less bottom time.

It was only when I made it back to the surface that I realised just how much danger I had been in.

Had I panicked or lost control I would still be there now! Nobody could quite believe what had happened, they were gobsmacked. I still have nightmares, especially in the summer.

Interview by Andrew G Marshall



Action man:
Gordon Ramsay –
footballer,
diver, marathon
runner – in the
kitchens of his
restaurant,
Aubergine, in
west London
Photograph:
David Rose



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Heads you win, tails you win



Photomontage: Joe Jenkins

As pay-offs to top executives whose performances fail to come up to scratch go through the roof, Nigel Cope counts the cost to the City

IT'S a tough life being a senior manager in a major UK company these days, as Jim Fifield of EMI has just found out. A few weeks ago, the New York-based American thought he was in line to take over as chief executive of Britain's premier record company with its roster of artists such as The Verve and Spice Girls. Now, after a boardroom bust-up over the top job, he is on his way out.

But don't feel too sorry for him. Mr Fifield, who is known in the industry as "Lucky Jim" because of his lavish pay, will have his fall cushioned by a "golden parachute" of around £1.2m as EMI buys him out of his lucrative contract. It is thought to be the biggest pay-off in UK corporate history.

But though the scale of Mr Fifield's golden goodbye is breathtaking, his experience is far from unusual.

Boardroom departures with lottery-winning pay settlements are becoming weekly events in the higher echelons of British business these days. Top company bosses may be well paid, but they are pushed out with ever-increasing frequency if their performance is not up to scratch. Pay-offs of £500,000 are typical for a chief executive. A million or more is not uncommon.

Some have compared the merry-go-round to life as a football manager.

In football, a bad run of form on the pitch is often followed rapidly by that dreaded call from the chairman. In major British companies – or at least those with shares listed on the stock market – a couple of profits warnings and a nose-diving share price are usually enough these days to bring the ejector seat into action.

"I think the reason is that the stakes have got higher," says one senior fund manager. "The rewards for success are greater and the threats posed by failure are more obvious."

The biggest companies are getting bigger as a result of globalisation and a wave of megamergers and the sums involved are now enormous. A bit of bad news can now wipe billions of pounds off a company's value in stock market terms and people want someone to blame.

Normally the people pushing out the boss are the non-executive directors whose job it is to ensure that the board is operating effectively and in the best interests of shareholders.

As Peter Butler, corporate focus director at Hermes, the pension fund group points out: "A few years ago, the non-executives were often pals of the chairman. Now most are genuinely independent and they are prepared to be the catalysts of change."

There has been a string of high-profile boardroom casualties over the last few months and most have been thrown overboard by the non-executives. The Jim Fifield fall-out at EMI came after his nomination for the top job was blocked by the non-executives. Last week Charles Bowen went as chief executive of Booker, the cash & carry group, after four profit warnings in 18 months.

Last summer, Martin Owen, the head of NatWest's investment banking division, fell on his sword after an £80 million "black hole" was discovered in the bank's accounts. And when Barclays decided to sell large chunks of its investment banking business last year after poor performance, Bill Harrison, the division's chief executive, resigned. He is reported to have earned more than £5m in 13 months.

Others who have quit suddenly have included Ann Iverson, the £1m-a-year American who ran Laura Ashley until last year. And Richard Clothier was ousted as chief executive of Dalgety, the Spiller's petfood company, after its financial performance turned into a dog's breakfast.

It is clear that being a chairman or chief executive of a major UK company is now a significantly less secure post than it was. Up until about 10 years ago, these jobs were, if not for life, then a good decade or

more. As long as you didn't do something spectacularly awful like take all your clothes off at the annual shareholders meeting, you were pretty much safe. Now the optimum length of service in these jobs is seen as five-seven years. After that a manager is considered stale, even past it.

A look back at some of the lengthy service of recent corporate history tells the story. Lord Weinstock was managing director of the GEC industrial group for more than 30 years but his successor, Lord Simpson, can only expect a fraction of that length of tenure.

And corporate dynasties are now frowned upon.

The Pilkington family ran the St Helens-based glass maker for over a century. But the last family member stepped down some time ago and it is unlikely that a Pilkington will ever run the business again.

David Sainsbury, Lord Sainsbury of Turville, still runs



That's rich: Jim Fifield (above) and Bill Harrison (right) have both benefited from 'golden parachutes'



the family supermarket empire but there are no family successors in sight. The same is true at Cadbury Schweppes, where a family member is still chairman, but new blood has been brought in to take the business forward. Having the right surname is no longer enough.

If directors are under pressure from their non-executives, this last group is often responding to pressure from City fund managers which control large investments in big companies.

These shareholders are becoming increasingly vocal in their criticism of under-performing directors, a feature of business life long established in the United States.

All this will not worry top managers too much whose skills are in such demand that they can negotiate lucrative contracts.

So if they succeed they receive generous bonuses and if they fail they pocket large pay-offs.

And even if a chief executive does get the boot they can often get an equally senior job elsewhere before too long.

This is assuming that their performance was not too dire and even then they can always try to argue that their strategy was affected by circumstances outside their control – like financial turmoil in the Far East or the strong pound.

And even if that does not work, they can go West and get a job on a board of an overseas company.

Additional research by Kerry Benefield and Lea Paterson

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There's no place like home



Street life: Oxford Circus, 1996 (above), Karen 1997 (below left) who died just four days later, Simon on the floor of his Camberwell flat 1998 (below left), with a friend and her children

Photographs: Martin Toft

WHEN Bill Shearman founded Crisis at Christmas it was a Conservative plot. Extraordinary as it might seem, the charity which is this month marking 30 years' crusading for the homeless began life as a bid to wrestle power from Labour in the East End of London.

Mr Shearman had finished his National Service and returned home to work in his father's builders' merchants and join the Tories. Realising the uphill struggle they faced in a fiercely pro-Labour area, he formed the East London Conservative Association (ELCA) and began to look around to see how it could make itself relevant to the impoverished electorate. "The idea behind ELCA was to try, very naively I suppose, to outflank the Labour Party in areas of social concern."

The problems of the time were vast. Official estimates for Britain put the number of homeless single people at 13,000, with 1,000 of them sleeping rough, the majority in London. The real figures were probably much higher.

In Cable Street, the notorious battle ground of Mosley's fascists, meths-drinkers and drop-outs lived in hotels. "The stench was terrible, and there were makeshift beds made of sacks," recalls Mr Shearman, now a bluff 60-year-old businessman. "I remember going and there was a man being looked after by a woman who was obviously on drugs, which was shocking in those days. Even in Scotland people talked about Cable Street."

With the backing of "One Nation" Tory Ian Macleod, then shadow Chancellor, Mr Shearman decided something must be done. But then, with amazing political selflessness, it was agreed that the problem was too big to be party-political.

"We thought everybody in society, all the 'haves', should unite – youth clubs,

Hundreds of people will be back on the streets later this week, as winter shelters close their doors. On Sunday, Crisis is staging a fund-raising show at the Globe Theatre to mark 30 years of helping the homeless – and as Louise Jury reports, there's more work to be done than ever



churches, parties – to raise money and highlight the people who were at the bottom of the heap," Mr Shearman says.

He found a socialist chairman in Nick Beacock, the local curate at St Barnabas' Church in East Ham (who now works for another housing charity). The aim was to raise money and give the homeless of the East End a proper Christmas. With £100 each from Macleod and the then Labour MP Reg Prentice, Mr Shearman began Crisis at Christmas was born.

"I went to see everyone in the parties, I involved the church. Ian Macleod tried to get us publicity but nobody was interested," Mr Shearman says. But they pressed ahead and organised four sponsored walks, from Windsor, Upminster, St Albans and Redhill, and a symbolic walk from Cable Street itself, culminating in a candle-lit rally. Three thousand people gathered in Hyde Park on 17 December 1967, where they were addressed by Macleod, along with Dr David Owen, then a young Labour MP, and Donald, later Lord Soper, the Methodist minister and still a vice-president of the charity.

They raised £7,000, which was distributed to organisations working in the East End. "I was profoundly disappointed," Bill

Shearman says. "I'd hoped, perhaps a bit ambitiously, to raise £50,000. But everybody else thought it was marvellous."

The following year they conjured up the idea of a pilgrimage in reverse, starting in Canterbury and coming to London.

Michael Ramsay, the then Archbishop, and Macleod led the start of the walk which ended in a rally in Westminster Central Methodist Hall. "Most people say that the pilgrimage put Crisis at Christmas on the map," Mr Shearman says.

The appeals became an annual event and the organisation registered as a charity. In 1972, it held its first "open Christ-

mas," offering shelter, food and support to the street homeless from a church in Lambeth. Now called simply Crisis, the charity works all year round with an annual budget of £5.5m.

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Thirty years ago, the single homeless were mostly older men – the "gentlemen of the road". In the 1980s, single homelessness became a young people's prob-

lem. The last government's rough sleepers' initiative helped many find somewhere to live, although teenagers continue to end up on the streets, often as the result of family breakdowns or conflicts over boyfriends and drugs. Now the failure of the Care in the Community policy and its impact on the mentally ill is the top priority.

The average life expectancy of single homeless people is 42. They are 50 times more likely to be fatally assaulted and one in 50 in London suffers from tuberculosis. Hundreds more are homeless outside the capital, where the smaller numbers mean even less support is available to them.

At the Globe, as Rory Bremner, Kathy Burke, Jane Horrocks and the singer Beth Orton take to the stage, up to 600 people will flood on to the streets as the winter shelters in London close.

"The problem is entirely resolvable given proper resourcing," Shaks Ghosh says. She is optimistic that the Government's social exclusion unit will help tackle the enormous problem of homelessness between departments.

Bill Shearman ended his close involvement with the charity after the 1969 pilgrimage. "I was tired of it," he admits.

"I didn't see myself as a social worker."

He praises those who took it forward. "To start a thing is one thing, but tribute should be paid to those who built it up step by step."

But he never expected it to be still going. "If you had asked us what we thought would happen in 30 years' time, we would have said that the problem would be solved," he says. What does it say about our society that it is not?

Tickets for *Under the Heavens at the Globe Theatre* on Sunday, 29 March, are available, price £5-£25 from Ticketmaster 0171 344 4444. It will be preceded by a candle-lit procession from St John's Church, Waterloo.

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Look out! Big Mother is watching you



TIM
HULSE

ANOTHER blow to our individual freedoms or just a helping hand from our friendly Government? Certainly it was a surprise when it emerged at the weekend that TV programmes are likely to be given ratings, which will grade transmissions according to the amount of sex, violence and bad language they contain.

Earlier this month we had

already had an indication of the way the Government is think-

ing on censorship when Chris Smith made it clear that he and his colleagues were not opposed to the V-chip in principle and announced that he would be evaluating its use in the United States, where all new television sets are legally required to carry one.

The so-called V-chip is a device which allows parents to block their children from seeing certain programmes, and its introduction in this country has been mooted for some time. It would be particularly effective if it were used in conjunction with programme grading.

In America, the chip has been championed by the flamboyant senator, Ed Markey, who considers the whole concept of V-chips "unassailable". At a recent meeting in London, Markey countered accusations that the V-chip smacks of Big Brother by saying that it was actually more like "Big Mother" because it offers extra protection for families.

"Big Mother" is a perfect phrase for summing up the Government's increasingly nannyish tendencies, typified recently in the banning of beef on

the bone. "There's far too much paternal government. It's that idea that the government is a kind of substitute parent," says Brian Micklethwait, editorial director of the Libertarian Alliance, which publishes pamphlets on such topics as free markets and social freedoms. As far as he is concerned, Big Mother is no better than Big Brother.

As a libertarian and outspoken opponent of the Big Mother society, Micklethwait would oppose any proposal that the V-chip should be compulsory in television sets. In his opinion it's up to the individual to decide whether to have one or not, not for the Government to demand it. And by the same token, he believes that it's up to individuals to decide whether they want to smoke or not, rather than for politicians to make smoking illegal by taxing it prohibitively. He sees the issue of passive smoking in terms of property rights and he is appalled at the idea of smoking being made illegal in public places.

And secondly, because socialism has collapsed: "There's a whole generation of meddlers who are out of jobs," he says. "They can't say the Government should run everything any more, so they're just left with a few respectable meddlers."

Micklethwait's views might be extreme compared to the view of others in this country.

but, in the United States, libertarianism is, without doubt, considerably more of a force to be reckoned with. This is what Bill Clinton discovered when he attempted to outlaw "indecent" or "patently offensive" material on the Internet two years ago. In a massive show of defiance, sites all over the World Wide Web were set against black backgrounds and the White House was avenged by a wave of non-stop e-mails from protesters.

He should have known better. The Internet is the true home of libertarianism. They might not like Big Mother, but here you will find frequent references to the godmother of it all, the rabidly anti-communist Russian emigre author, Ayn Rand, who founded a cult of self-interest known as Objectivism.

On the Net you will also find true hard-core libertarianism, the kind of stuff that can make the blood run cold. This is a brave new world where child slavery can be justified and it's perfectly reasonable for private security firms to own tactical nuclear weapons. No room for Big Mother here.

لما من الأجل



Jenny Saville
and Glen
Luchford:
Closed
Contact 14.
(Photographed
with Hasselblad
through perspex)

Stories rnage stop ution Vile bodies?

Plain sick or life as art?
Ann Treneman finds the
human form is testing
the boundaries of taste

SUE FOX has taken some 1,500 photographs of dead bodies she has met in a Manchester morgue but hardly anyone has seen them. And for a good reason. "I did a couple of exhibitions and left a comments book and got loads of abuse. Things like 'you're sick' and 'your life must be very scary' and 'you've got problems, you must come to the Lord.' I found it quite funny actually. I just reckon that a lot of people have got a lot of fear around death."

She would reckon right. Now, as part of Channel 4's *Vile Bodies* series, many more people will see the photographs and be shocked in spite of themselves. They say we live in an age without taboos, but they are wrong. All you need to do to prove that to yourself is to open the book that goes with the series on the bus or the train and watch people flee. I mention this to series producer Adam Barker and he is not surprised. "Many of the photographs deal with real taboos. We are looking at how artists push the boundaries of areas that are normally repressed. Our buttons will get pushed at some point. Everyone has different fears."

There are three programmes in the series around the themes of nakedness, children and death. "We did not start out thinking how can we upset people. After all, that is fairly easy to do," said Barker. Instead he started out wanting to show the work of several artists. These include the likes of Nick Watlington, who re-stages suicides and Sally Mann, who photographed her own children to great controversy. The series took two years of thinking time and nine months to film. "As a society we have such rigid and defined ideas of what is a normal body," says Barker, "and about what is seen as abnormal and normal. All of these photographers are questioning what that is."

Jenny Saville had a friend at art school who used to draw on her leg where she wanted her body to end. "Of course it was completely futile because the line kept moving," says Saville. The diet may have been a failure but the idea was not. "It stuck in my head and began a ball rolling. I started to question how we approach the female body in media and magazines," she says.

She wanted images of larger bodies but found that she had to go to porn and medicine to find them. Then Saville – now best known for her larger-than-life paintings of the female body – became interested in plastic surgery and how we choose to change our bodies. She was in New York observing plastic surgery when she met fashion photographer Glenn Luchford, when he came over to photograph her for a magazine article. Both of them had hangovers, so they went to lunch instead. Jenny had already started experimenting with photographing her own naked body pressed against glass but was having trouble with reflection. She asked Glenn's advice. He gave it and they decided to collaborate.

"I wanted to make a smear of the body. We are so used to seeing one kind of image. The tummy button is always in the same place and the breasts on either side. I wanted to disrupt that," she says. She succeeded. The images were achieved by Saville lying on an inch-thick platform of Perspex directly over



(Photographed on Pentax 6.7)

Jouko Lehtola, Untitled, 1997

Photographed on Pentax 6.7

Luchford with his camera. "The first time I think he was quite apprehensive. He's used to fashion models whose bodies are frail and small. I'm not ashamed of my nakedness and just told him what to do."

They did six shoots of three or four days each (Saville's body got too bruised and sore to do any more). They used Polaroids at first. All in all there are 3,000 images, but only 17 have been made into huge prints. The ones of her head are the most recent shots and the scale of the prints is huge, with each of her teeth being about a foot tall. Does she think the images are disturbing? "Some people say they find them strangely beautiful. I don't usually think about what somebody else thinks is acceptable or not, though."

JOUKO LEHTOLA is a 34-year-old Finnish photographer, who used to photograph bands until he realised he was more interested in the audience and innocence lost. "I got interested in what happens before teenagers came to the concert, outside the hall, in the parking places. There are rites. Girls do make-up and they listen to music and drink beer, waiting for the evening."

Over the years he has taken thousands of photographs of teens between the ages of 15 and 25. He goes to the places he went to as a teenager in Helsinki, on the beach, in bars and also to the midsummer festivals held in the middle of forests, hundreds of miles from parents. "They are doing the same rituals that their parents have done. They have kissed for the first time in those places and drank their first drink. Summer is short here and so it is the only time when you can actually feel freedom. I learned much more there than at school. About what? About life, about girls, just experiences."

The photographs show kids smogging, with neckfuls of love-bites, drunk and disorderly (with the black eyes to prove it). "They are not ashamed. No, they are not," he says. "I try to be at the same level as them. I try to respect them. When I get into these situations I laugh and I cry with them. The camera is like my eye. They can see that. The key is to be very very open."

He spotted the couple with the blue and yellow hair at a midsummer festival where 13-year-olds run wild on home-brew. "They were sitting there kissing and I asked if I could take their photo. They kissed for three frames. I mainly just take one or two shots of each and not more because otherwise they start to pose too much. I am trying to capture the feeling when I saw them."



(Photographed on second-hand Yashica)

"They are not posing in that moment. I have to go up to them and have a short conversation. If they trust me in that short moment, then it works. Otherwise it doesn't and I can see that the photographs have been taken by an outsider."

SUE FOX says she has always been interested in the unusual. She remembers one school project on religion, for instance, where everyone was doing weddings and births. Except for Sue. She was doing funerals. Then in the Eighties she became a Buddhist and her interest in death grew. "I really wanted to get into a mortuary and face my own fear of death. I have had a lot of moments where I have been afraid, but I like facing my demons." It took eight years of trying but finally, in 1993, she was given access.

"My first body was a Turkish lorry driver who had drowned. I was shocked. I wasn't sick or anything. I observed as much as possible and took some photos and went home and reflected." She has been back at least 80 times and says that every corpse has shocked her in some way. Sometimes she is "shocked", sometimes she cries. "I didn't become anaesthetised. Basically I am capturing something that is going to happen to everybody. Most people have post mortems done to them."

Every body is remembered in detail. The one in our photograph, which is being cut up and cleaned by a mortician, belonged to an emaciated man who may have been an alcoholic. "I just sort of empathised and wondered what his last few years were like," says Fox. We talk about another of her photographs, of a black man who was only discovered after he'd been dead for several days. The photograph shows little bits of paper all round him. "Those little things are actually shredded fax forms that are put in the body cavities to soak up the blood. He was very swollen because he had a lot of gas in him. So they just popped him and all the gas came out. You can see that his skin is peeling away. You think that people of other races have quite a layer of coloured skin but it literally tissue thin."

The Vile Bodies programmes *Kids and The Dead* will be shown on 30 March and 6 April on Channel 4. The book *Vile Bodies: Photography and the Crisis of Looking* by Chris Townsend is published by Prestel at £24.95.

Women on the edge of ecstasy

Tom Lubbock
loses his way in
Nancy Spero's
free-flowing visions
of a female utopia

PICTURES are good at paradise. One reason is that unlike written stories, they only need to show a single moment of their blissed-out worlds. They don't have to imagine what happens there on a day-to-day basis. All the same, these visions can become little oppressive – lots of singing and dancing, lots of lying around, all right for a holiday but you wouldn't want to live there. Sometimes indeed, as with the illustrations to Jehovah's Witness leaflets depicting a universal picnic in national costumes in a safari park, the promised land looks distinctly off-putting.

There's a kind of women's version of paradise on view in Birmingham now. This is *Let the Priests Tremble* by Nancy Spero, American artist and feminist. It's a big free-form mural painting, spreading over all four sides of the largest room at the IKON Gallery's new premises. With its multitude of multi-coloured female figures floating floor-to-ceiling around the high, bright space, it's a fine advert for the architecture. It's also a paradise that looks more like liberty – a picture without a frame and without a central focus, an open, all-around ground on which the images are scattered in groups or singly, with plenty of white breathing and moving space between them.

Spero's is an art of quotations, a form of collage. She is 72, and for the last 20 years, since she gave up straight painting, her work has deployed a growing scrap-book of found images of women taken from a wide range of sources. Hand-printed on these walls you find figures from Egyptian tombs, Greek vases, aboriginal rock drawings, gorgons, Mesopotamian mother goddesses, the strange creatures of mad art, body-builders from muscle mags. There are pert, leather-bound nymphs from porno comics. There's the Celtic fertility gorgon, the *Sheela-na-gig*, holding open her vagina with both hands.

Dynamic, aggressive, tormented, ecstatic, grotesque, or obscene, they're all of them caught up in a celebratory Maenad dance, rushing in headlong stampedes, spinning off in serene flight (though sometimes taking time out in more static tableaux). It's a paradise in opposition, too. The full title, whose words bound across the walls in red lettering, goes: "Let the priests tremble, we're going to show them our sexist too bad for them if they fall apart on discovering that women aren't men, and that the mother doesn't have one". The declaration quotes Hélène Cixous, French feminist philosopher. "Sex" evidently means genitals. The call is: Up the fatty!

Of course, this may not seem a very persuasive paradise – in fact it might be a rather vapid gyno-utopian fantasy which imagines women rescued from history, set free, and united in a wild, trans-cultural, triumphal get-together. (And the Cixous quote surely isn't encouraging, too thrilled by its own daring rebelliousness: yeah, get you, priests!)

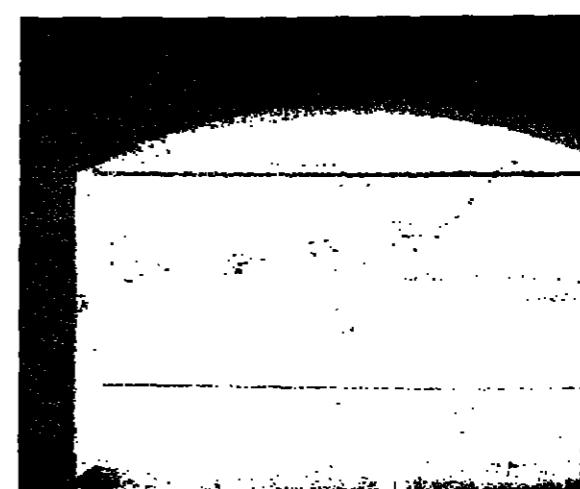
Well, the utopian impulse is there, but the collage technique gives it a turn and an edge. The images are lifted out of their times and places, and set together; at the same time, as with any found images, they don't lose the memory of their original contexts and identities, which pull them back and pull them apart. This is why the collage is important. If Spero had painted the figures herself from scratch, you wouldn't feel that tug.

As it is, these women plainly don't belong in the same big picture. Their styles and scales clash. The groups and stories they form are never quite in sync. Their original actions tell against the ways they've been manipulated – turned upside

"womanly" aesthetic of loss, but eventually it loses me.

The other artist in IKON's opening show is a young British one, Georgina Starr. I must admit, I never liked her work, didn't expect to here, and didn't. What's more tricky (in terms of trying to describe it in a way that isn't completely numb), I can't really imagine what even its fans manage to admire in it. I guess they must find the oafishness zany, and the naivete piquant or somehow deceptively.

Tuberama is part video, part installation. The video shows a very crudely, animated and childishly told cartoon story. Passengers on an uncomfortable underground train journey are transported to a magic castle, where a magician makes little creatures out of the 'weakest emotions' of each one, for them to take home in a jar and nurture. The walk-through in-



Free-form: Spero's mural at the IKON
Newsteam

stallation looks like the set of a low-tech kids' TV show, and kind of tells the story again, with cut-out figures, a castle, and a model tube-train that goes round and round.

All I can think of saying is that the cartoon itself would be lucky to be shown on big or small screen; that if you find all this fun, it could only seem so in the rarefied air of an art gallery, if you find it thoughtful, that's a tribute to the generosity of your own intelligence, and if you find it a disturbing psychodrama, you must be of a very nervous disposition.

Nancy Spero & Georgina Starr,
IKON Gallery, 1 Oozells Square,
Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1
2HS (0121 248 0708); until 24
May; free admission.

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Citizenship for a new generation

SHOULD British children be taught how to be citizens? Yes, says the Government, whose report on how to bring this about in schools will soon be out. The Prime Minister's favourite education guru, Professor Michael Barber, wants teachers to fill the gap left, as he puts it, by "the absence of God and Marx". No, says Patrick Tobin, a leading spokesman for fee-paying schools, who has attacked Professor Barber about the dangers of "indoctrination". So who's right?

No part of British education has been so dangerously neglected as "citizenship". We do not adequately teach our children what it means to be citizens in a modern state. The 1988 Education Act places a clear obligation on schools to promote the "spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils in the school and of society". The fulfilment of the last of these is patchy. This is why the intervention of the Government's head of the standards and effectiveness unit, to give Professor Barber his precise title, is so important. Here's what he said: "Christianity has become a minority interest, still hugely influential historically and culturally, but no longer able to claim unquestioning obedience. The vigour and urgency with which we are seeking to modernise our education system is driven in part by a belief that together we can and must do better if the generation currently in our schools is to find fulfilment. I am looking for an ethos that can be shared by people who have religious beliefs and those who do not".

Well, that ethos is ready and waiting – plural democracy. Mr Tobin, Chair of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, says this means making teachers "deliver a particular view of society". He misses the point. The promotion of liberal, democratic and plural values and the stimulation of moral thought ensures the precise opposite.

The far greater danger is endure a system in which teachers deliver no particular view – or understanding – of society at all. We are already living with some of the consequences of this – manifested as it is in cynicism about politics and politicians, poor and declining turnouts in elections and referendums, and the weakness in civic discourse in this country.

Recent research by Professor Ivor Crewe has shown a strong link between fostering social, political and moral "debate" and "participation". It surely stands to reason that if children are not informed about the existence of something called a local council and what it does they are less likely to grow up into the kind of people who think it is remotely worthwhile to bother to vote for it, stand for election to it, or even be aware of what it does. In John Kennedy's model of citizenship – "ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country" – we are increasingly unlikely to be able to answer even the first question. It represents another, less talked about, aspect of social exclusion.

But there is a potent, danger with teaching "citizenship" – boredom. The worst of all possible worlds would be to so botch the effort that a whole generation thinks that citizenship is about as interesting as geology or algebra. The way in which a more controlled, productive and practical "citizenship" is taught is obviously crucial. Bodies like the Citizenship Foundation have developed excellent ideas for encouraging children, from primary school onwards, to develop morally aware habits of thought. Teaching methods and materials can be developed which ensure that one of the major failures of "civics" in the 1950s and 1960s – an air of detachment – can be avoided.

The Government's own proposals, from the Advisory Group on Citizenship Education, chaired by Professor Bernard Crick, are imminent. We should expect great things from the author of *In Defence of Politics*.

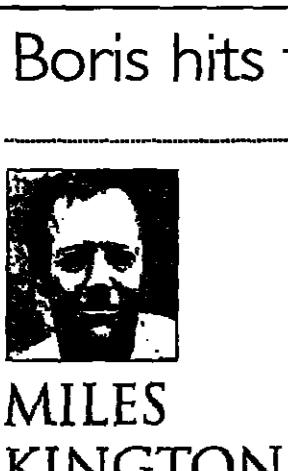
Citizenship needs to be taught well but it also needs to be taught differently – not as an exam subject and certainly not with a rigid curriculum.

The fostering of a generation of "responsible citizens" is possible. There is sufficient goodwill for it and it need not make huge demands on resources. The quality of public debate on devolution in Scotland stands as an example of what can be achieved. One has only to think about the urgency and complexity of issues like the single currency to realise the challenge that await government and teachers alike. Tony Blair's government has embarked on a great programme of political reforms. The fostering of a generation of responsible citizens has the potential to be the vital human underpinning of those changes.

Cherie goes in to bat for a true blue brewer

BRITAIN'S brewers are having a fight with Europe in the courts. As the Tory party's oldest allies, one might expect little less of them. What is more surprising is the lady heading their legal team. Mrs Cherie Blair deserves a separate life as Ms Cherie Booth, QC, one of the hottest briefs in town. That she is a successful lawyer earning more than her husband is a source of pleasure for all who want Britain to be a meritocracy where women with talent can get ahead. None the less she does deserve a measure of privacy in her profession, where the "cab rank" rule applies and barristers take whatever cases the solicitors take.

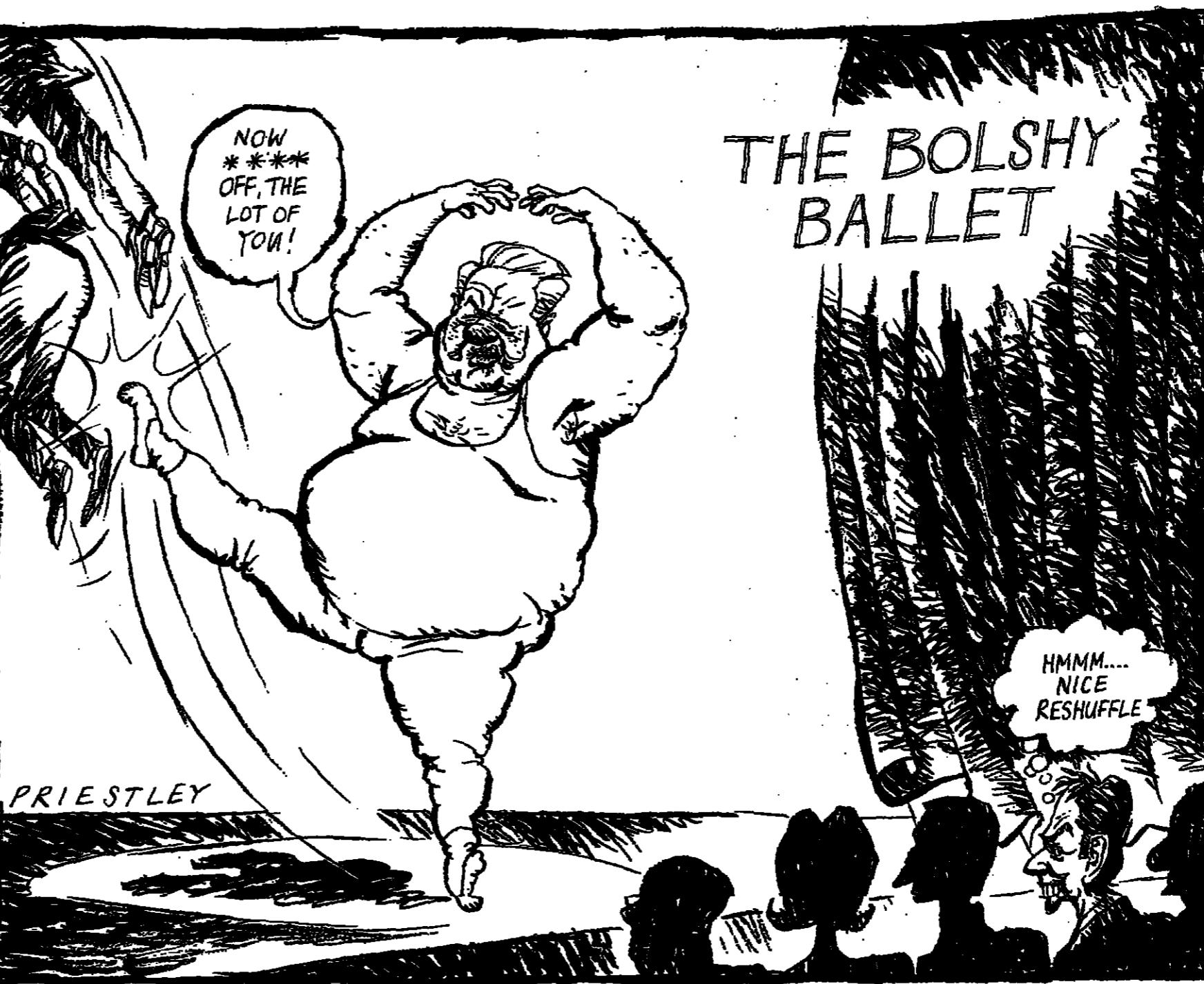
But we would need to be superhumanly self-denying not to notice the irony of Ms Booth's appearance yesterday on behalf of a brewer, Shepherd Neame. This is no ordinary blue brewer. Without the company Cherie Booth is representing in the Court of Appeal, the Conservative Party in the county of Kent would long ago have strophed: they have supplied several generations of Kent County Council Tory members. Now the wife of the Labour premier is going into bat for them, in a case moreover which turns on restrictions in our trading relations with the European Union. Ms Booth will, on past performance, turn in a skilled and persuasive presentation of her client's case. In so doing she may be helping making the world safe for Toryism. What a tribute to political pluralism.



MILES
KINGTON

"IT'S disgusting. It's revolting. He's brought the club into total disrepute." "I've supported the side for thirty years, but I've never felt this ashamed." "He should resign straightaway. Sooner, if possible." Just three reactions from shell-shocked supporters of Russia United, the club which started off the season so well and has now wandered dangerously close to the anonymity zone in the international league, writes *Rene McGrath*, our football specialist. And the action which sparked off this torrent of protest? The shock decision by chairman Boris Yeltsin to sack the entire board of Russia United yesterday, and all the players as well, and to fill all the functions himself.

As soon as the decision was made public, thousands of fans marched through the streets of Moscow last night chanting: "Come on, Boris! Put that bottle of vodka away and pull your socks up! Alterna-



Moving the King's Library

MAY we reply to Brian Lang's letter (23 March) concerning the dismantling of the King's Library at the British Museum and the transfer of the books collected by George III from the magnificent room specifically designed by Sir Robert Smirke to contain them, to the new British Library at St Pancras? On a major heritage issue such as this, an exception must be made to the general rule that the national collection of books should be housed together in one place.

While many great libraries around the world are housed in distinguished buildings, there are all too few instances where a collection of books created by one individual survive intact in the period architectural setting designed for them. King George III's library remains in the neo-classical room designed for its reception and is thus a remarkable document of the taste of the Enlightenment.

Mr Lang makes much of the need to benefit researchers by having all the British Library's books together on one site, but anyone involved at public expense, because it is "virtually impossible for someone to be interviewed by a psychiatrist and leave the consulting room without having some psychiatric label attached to them." If this is true, it is not indictment of the principle that psychiatric injury should be a compensable loss, but just a condemnation of the practices of some psychiatrists.

Finally, Mr Lang argues that the room at the British Museum cannot provide the proper environmental conditions and that, left there, the books of the King's Library will disintegrate. This is a spurious argument and many libraries around the world manage to provide proper environmental conditions in historic interiors. It takes money and commitment. In any case, the British Museum intends to borrow other collections of books to fill up the empty bookcases. As the Museum will therefore be obliged to undertake a complete restoration of the King's Library one must presume that a part of this process will be the provision of the right environmental conditions for period books.

Let us hope that eventually an enlightened approach to the management of our heritage assets will prevail and that in due course the

books of the King's Library can be returned to their purpose-built room at the British Museum.

GEORGE SAYN: Lord NAPIER and

ETTRICK; JOHN JULIUS NORWICH; Lord POOLE;

HANNAH WOLFSON

STEINBERG

London W1

books of the King's Library can be returned to their purpose-built room at the British Museum.

Hence, and perhaps very contentiously, psychiatric evidence will no longer be regarded as unimpeachable by virtue of it being substantiated solely by psychiatrists.

Dr GARY SLAPPER

Director of the Law Programme

The Open University

Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

WE wish to point out that St Chad's Cathedral has no shares, either in Lucas Varity, Rolls Royce or any other company, British or foreign. In fact, the St Chad's Cathedral Maintenance Fund only holds its head above water thanks to the weekly generosity of our own Mass congregation and to an annual collection held in all parishes of the Archdiocese of Birmingham on the first Sunday of the March each year. Our debt to the clergy and laity of the Archdiocese is enormous. Like most other cathedrals, our running costs continue to rise as our income falls.

The Rev PATRICK H DALY

Administrator

St Chad's Cathedral

Birmingham

Cathedral finances

I AM astonished to read on your front page ("16 cathedrals invest in arms firms", 23 March) that Southwark Cathedral is amongst those whom you allege hold shares in arms firms. The very small financial reserve we do have is not invested in the arms trade. You should be aware that cathedrals act in their own right independently of diocesan finances, and have done so since the Reformation. The allegations refer to diocesan holdings and not to those of the cathedral.

You also quote Paul Flynn MP saying that contributors for a roof will be alarmed to find their money invested in the arms trade. The law is perfectly clear – money for the roof goes towards the roof. If any church were to divert designated donations they would be acting illegally.

In this diocese of 2.5 million people and 378 Anglican churches, just one parish has shares in a bequest trust fund invested with GEC, which diocesan authorities drew to the parish's attention some months ago. This is a matter for the trustees in that parish to decide upon and not for the diocese.

The finances of English cathedrals are open to public scrutiny and they invest according to strict ethical investment codes of practice. It is for your readers to judge whether they trust cathedrals more than newspapers.

The Very Rev COLIN SLEE

Priest, Southwark Cathedral

London SE1

of day and night, making pledges that nobody can understand. The *Moscow Mafia Monthly* magazine even managed to interview Boris Yeltsin's social circle to verify reports of endless drinking sessions in the HQ of Russia United, and the reporter's account certainly seems to justify what was said.

"As soon as I arrived, I was plied with vodka. After that I was plied with more vodka. After that, I think I was plied with more vodka, but I can't remember anything much and I found myself at dawn wandering the streets and looking for a taxi. I did not find one. I still have a hangover, days later."

At a time when Russia United is fighting to keep its place in international ratings, this seems a terminally damaging revelation. Certainly, the fans think so, and were out again in Moscow this morning chanting: "Don't be a fool, Boris – jack it in and let us build from the ground upwards

again in a sensible manner! Or are you too drunk already to listen to us?"

But many Muscovites simply shrug and turn away. After all, they are inured to reverses and misfortunes. Russia United has known capricious bosses before. For centuries, all Russian football was in the hands of the Russian royal family, who had dissident players taken out and shot. The first commoner to be put in charge of the team, Lenin, was thought at first to be different but he also had players taken out and shot – indeed, he also had the Russian royal family, ex-owners of the team, taken out and shot.

The next long-serving manager of the team, Joe Stalin, had all critics of his strategy sent to Siberia, or starved to death, but he retained his post for many years after notching up notable victories against Germany in the 1940s, and some creditable draws against the Americans. Since Stalin, however, Russian team planning has been in the hands of some old and sick men who should never have been put in charge of the team, and their reputation has crumbled.

Boris Yeltsin was thought to be a great hope for the future re-emergence of Russia United, but this latest debacle suggests strongly that he will not be the awaited saviour. Public anger has further been fuelled by reports that Boris Yeltsin controls all the vodka outlets selling drink to Russia United fans, and all the clothes shops selling typical Russia United clothes to people who wear that sort of clothing.

Now, as I write, writes *Rene McGrath*, the streets of Moscow are again full of fans, chanting: "Come on, Boris! You're not a

Iniquitous Arts Council

IT MAY be unpalatable for Anthony Everitt, former Secretary General of the Arts Council, that the author Richard Wits sees the history of the Arts Council largely in terms of the personalities who have run it and that "he finds only knaves and fools" (*Books, ISM*, 21 March). But that is the way it is, according to the findings of a recent report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration.

His three-year investigation into a complaint against the Arts Council by the Kosh dance company found that the council with information unreasonably failed to observe its own procedural and ethical code, based decisions on incomplete information and disseminated misleading, prejudicial and unjustified information about the company.

Those responsible included the most senior officers and representatives of the council. Just how many other companies, directors and venues are suffering or have been destroyed as a result of the failings of those responsible for decision-making at the Arts Council?

We need to build a radical alternative to this iniquitous, self-serving system. There is talk of the Arts Council reinventing itself. It will need to do much more than that to repair the damage it has done to the arts community.

MICHAEL MERWITZER

Artistic Director, The Kosh

London N7

Words fail me

ADMITTING to failure is never easy, but I can only report a less than satisfactory result after taking the elementary vocabulary test in Judith Judd's article ("Tough words to test our children", 21 March).

The crisis in school teacher recruitment has been widely reported. If the subject matter related to the words in the article is typical of the general syllabus content for 11-year-olds, is it any wonder that teachers are leaving the profession in droves and insufficient replacements are coming forward?

BOB ASHTON

Chester

Boris hits the bottle as Russia United face anonymity in the international league



MILES
KINGTON

"IT'S disgusting. It's revolting. He's brought the club into total disrepute." "I've supported the side for thirty years, but I've never felt this ashamed." "He should resign straightaway. Sooner, if possible." Just three reactions from shell-shocked supporters of Russia United, the club which started off the season so well and has now wandered dangerously close to the anonymity zone in the international league, writes *Rene McGrath*, our football specialist. And the action which sparked off this torrent of protest? The shock decision by chairman Boris Yeltsin to sack the entire board of Russia United yesterday, and all the players as well, and to fill all the functions himself.

As soon as the decision was made public, thousands of fans marched through the streets of Moscow last night chanting: "Come on, Boris! Put that bottle of vodka away and pull your socks up! Alterna-

tively, go to bed with the bottle of vodka and hand the team over to someone who can handle it! Or maybe just give us the vodka and try a bit of mineral water for a change!" However, a defiant Boris Yeltsin issued a communiqué from his holiday home by the Black Sea saying that the club would be safe in his hands, as well as the vodka, and he brooked no discussion. A close aide said that Boris would be the chairman, the manager, the trainer and the whole team, too, until further notice.

What sparked off this extraordinary state of affairs was the revelation in a Russian magazine, the *Moscow Mafia Monthly*, that Boris Yeltsin has been indulging in regular binges of booze and power-broking. He has been on the phone for hours on end to Baghdad talking to the mighty Saddam Hussein, manager of Iraq Bandits, pledging his support in international matches, and ringing up the United States at all hours

of day and night, making pledges that nobody can understand. The *Moscow Mafia Monthly* magazine even managed to interview Boris Yeltsin's social circle to verify reports of endless drinking sessions in the HQ of Russia United, and the reporter's account certainly seems to justify what was said.

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The next long-serving manager of the team, Joe Stalin, had all critics of his strategy sent to Siberia, or starved to death, but he retained his post for many years after notching up notable victories against Germany in the 1940s, and some creditable draws against the Americans. Since Stalin, however, Russian team planning has been in the hands of some old and sick men who should never have been put in charge of the team, and their reputation has crumbled.

Boris Yeltsin was thought to be a great hope for the future re-emergence of Russia United, but this latest debacle suggests strongly that he will not be the awaited saviour. Public anger has further been fuelled by reports that Boris Yeltsin controls all the vodka outlets selling drink to Russia United fans, and all the clothes shops selling typical Russia United clothes to people who wear that sort of clothing.

Now, as I write, writes *Rene McGrath*, the streets of Moscow are again full of fans, chanting: "Come on, Boris! You're not a

young man, you know, and you owe it to the team to put in a full day at the office! So knock off the vodka and get cracking ably, bloodless coup! This is our last warning."

Colin Patterson

COLIN PATTERSON was one of the most influential and best loved evolutionary biologists of the last half-century. He was a magnet for a steady stream of visitors, including zoologists, palaeontologists, molecular biologists, science historians, philosophers, editors and radio and television interviewers from all over the world to the fossil fish section of the Natural History Museum, where he was the Curator for more than 30 years.

Patterson had a prodigious memory whether for scientific fact or for the geography of places he had visited or lived in. From 1962 onwards, he would once a week peruse all the individual libraries in the Natural History Museum - reading the journals and new books as they appeared and reading every paper he considered relevant. This ever-increasing memory bank, coupled with his innate curiosity, not only provided him with the information for his own inductive reasoning and lateral thinking, but also allowed him to advise his colleagues on their numerous scientific problems.

He would reformulate their questions incisively in basic form, cutting through the extraneous facts. He also shared the information he had accumulated with the authors of the manuscripts he reviewed and improved (some 25 a year).

Patterson was born in Hammersmith, west London, and ed-

ited in his groups (that is, for pattern). Patterson and Nelson realised that these methods (now called cladistics) were more precise and explicit than those previously used (viz., ancestral-descendant relationships) and so they carried the message to London and New York.

In spite of opposition it spread rapidly. None the less in the late 1970s the controversy surrounding cladistics as a method of systematics emerged in the letter columns of *Nature*. This caused Patterson to write a short, succinct paper to the *Biologist* (1980) explaining the "new" methodology, pointing out that it forced systematists to be explicit about the groups they recognise, and the characters of those groups.

In 1968 Patterson became acquainted with another member of the American Museum of Natural History, Don Rosen, who like Gareth Nelson worked on recent (rather than fossilised) fishes. They published several seminal papers together, all including a discussion of fossil forms and one dealing specifically with the problem of classifying fossils in relation to living organisms.

More recently (since 1992) Patterson teamed up with yet another American co-worker, David Johnson of the Smithsonian Institution, with whom he was collaborating at the time of his death. Together they published several important papers dealing with the broad sweep of teleo-phylogeny. In summary he published some 150 papers, books and reviews.

Outside this published work he contributed to a variety of scientific causes. From 1978 to 1982 and from 1982 to 1985 he served as Zoological Editor and then Editorial Secretary of the Linnean Society.

In the late 1980s, when systematics and the fate of taxonomy was in question, he gave evidence before the House of Lords subcommittee on systematic biology research and helped convince the Government that the Natural History Museum was an original and unparalleled systematic institution which should be protected.

Again, when the science of molecular systematics (for working out the relationships between and among animals and plants) was gathering pace, Patterson was at the forefront and his expertise much in demand. He was invited separately by both French and Swedish biological councils to sit on panels to set up their respective research programmes. His final official appointment came last year to the board of trustees of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington.

In 1996, 31 of the world's leading experts on fish phylogeny combined to produce *Interrelationships of Fishes*, a Feat-schrift in his honour.

Brian Gardiner

Colin Patterson, natural historian: born London 13 October 1933; Lecturer, Guy's Hospital Medical School 1957-62; Curator of Fossil Fishes, Natural History Museum, London 1962-93; Honorary Research Fellow, Department of Palaeontology 1993-98; Research Associate in Ichthyology, American Museum of Natural History 1969-98; FRS 1993; married 1955 Rachel Richards (two daughters); died London 9 March 1998.

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Patterson: systematics

uated at Tonbridge School. He did his National Service in the Royal Engineers and then read Zoology, specialising in parasitology, at Imperial College, London, graduating in 1957. Two years earlier he had married Rachel, the elder daughter of the artist Celia Richards and Francis Richards.

On graduation he was appointed Lecturer in Biology at Guy's Hospital Medical School; five years later he joined the Natural History Museum as Curator of Fossil Fishes. While at Guy's he completed a PhD in three years at University College London, for which he worked on cretaceous fishes ("teleosts" or bony fishes such as salmon, cod, perch and herring) in the Natural History Museum. Like all his subsequent papers it was well illustrated by his own hand, and was published by the Royal Society in 1964.

In the late 1960s he met up with another ichthyologist, Gareth Nelson (then at the American Museum of Natural History, New York). Both had attended Lars Brundin's lecture on phylogenetic principles - classification of animals and plants - during the 1967 Nobel Symposium where Brundin had explained the new methodology of Willi Hennig which searched

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BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER
NEWS DESK: 0171-293 2636 FAX: 0171-293 2098 E-MAIL: INDYBUSINESS@INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Exports agony as pound soars to 12-year high

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

THE POUND climbed to painfully strong levels yesterday, piling the pressure on exporters, as its index against a range of currencies returned to a 12-year high.

It ended at 107.9, up 0.5, matching its peak in January 1989 and the strongest since the start of 1986. Against the German mark it gained a pfenning to rise above DM3.06, close to last summer's peak.

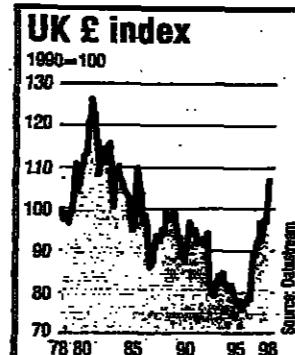
Analysts were at a loss to explain the surge yesterday. Trading volumes were not unusually heavy and there was little news to affect the currency markets.

The main rationale given for the renewed strength of sterling yesterday was the fact that there was no more attractive currency around. But that will have been scant comfort to either Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or the Bank of England as the chorus of complaint from exporting industries grew.

Ian Peters, deputy director of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), said yesterday: "This means more pain for industry and more damage to our export effort. This is beginning to be a very serious situation."

The latest trade figures due on Thursday are widely expected to show another £1bn-plus monthly shortfall of exports compared to imports in January. The underlying trend in visible trade has been deteriorating for the past few months, with export volumes declining while import volumes continue to grow strongly.

The Chancellor said at the weekend that he was concerned about the impact of the strong pound on exporters, but short-



term worries could not override the long-term goal of stability.

"This is not what Labour's sterling crises were supposed to be about," said Alison Cottrell of Paine Webber. The currency markets had welcomed Mr Brown's tough Budget, she said.

Like most analysts in the City, the Treasury expects the pound to fall in value at some stage. The catch is that this might not happen until the summer or later.

Yesterday's jump in oil prices, along with events in Russia, helped propel sterling higher. It has a residual petrocurrency status, and was also boosted by the fact that turmoil in eastern Europe always tends to weaken the German mark.

An additional factor is the publication tomorrow of the long-awaited reports on the single currency from the European Commission and the European Monetary Institute (EMI).

The membership of 11 countries from the start is now assured, despite the fact that some will not meet all of the Maastricht criteria. But the EMI report is expected to be critical of the budget policies of some member governments, notably Italy.

Theo Waigel, Germany's Finance Minister, has moved to quell fears that pressing ahead with a broad membership will make EMU unstable by proposing that the start of the "stability pact", an agreement on tough fiscal policies, should be brought forward to this summer.

His proposals have been welcomed by Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the EU's monetary affairs commissioner, although they would need to be agreed by heads of government at the special EMU summit in early May.

Even so, some financial analysts predict the German mark could weaken if the reports this week are unexpectedly critical of the likely EMI members. Some also see a possibility of a final revaluation for "peripheral" currencies such as the Spanish peseta and Finnish markka.

Underlying all of these short-term considerations driving the pound upwards lies the fundamental fact that the UK economy remains very buoyant, while the continental ones are not yet picking up strongly. This divergence is reflected in long-term interest rates in Britain that remain well over a percentage point higher than the equivalent rates in Germany.

"Until the Bank of England is prepared to signal it thinks interest rates have probably gone high enough, there will be no great release of breath in the markets," said Ms Cottrell.

With the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee not due to meet for another two weeks, however, there appears little prospect of short-term relief for Britain's export industries.



Rolling out the future: Tony Shaw of NatWest, right, and Bernd Euler

Oil prices leap on producers' deal to cut output

By Michael Harrison

THE PRICE of oil soared yesterday, triggering a surge in British energy stocks, as the markets reacted to the surprise weekend deal between three top producing countries to cut output.

But experts warned that the gains from the Riyadh agreement could be overwhelmed in the longer term as the Asian economic crisis and other factors cut demand and pushed down crude prices.

Yesterday the price of Brent blend rose by \$2 per barrel on Friday's close to reach \$41.18 (£8.60) for spot crude and \$15.18 for May delivery.

Oil companies have seen their shares hammered in recent months following down oil prices which had fallen from \$25 per barrel a year ago to below \$13 per barrel.

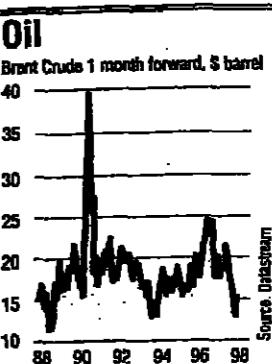
The stock market reacted positively yesterday, with BP shares rising 7.5 per cent to 933.5p, Shell Transport & Trading up 18.75p to 453p and Enterprise Oil up 30p to 573p.

The stock market bounces back followed a verbal agreement between Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Mexico to curb output collectively by nearly 1 million barrels.

The oil market had been in freefall since November last year when Saudi Arabia and other OPEC countries decided to increase their production levels by 10 per cent.

These moves were almost immediately undermined by the currency crisis in south-east Asia, the UN oil export deal with Iraq and a warmer than expected winter. These made the supply/demand significantly crude prices to a 25-year low.

The new euro account, opened with NatWest, will enable Siemens to deal with customers and suppliers in euros. NatWest said a further 2,000 big UK companies were interested in opening an account in euros. Its research shows that 40 per cent of larger UK businesses will start trading in euros from next January.



The three nations are hoping that other major producers will follow their lead so that 2 million barrels can be cut. Kuwait and Algeria have agreed to reduce their supplies by 125,000 and 50,000 barrels respectively but Egypt and Malaysia have refused.

The new agreement between Saudi Arabia and Venezuela from OPEC and Mexico, a non-OPEC supplier, was extremely important, according to the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies.

"It could be a watershed because it shows Saudi is willing to act without warning. Who will bet on \$10 oil prices when producers are willing to bite back?" asked Dr Paul Horsnell, OIES deputy director.

It was also impressive because it brought together two previous antagonists in Saudi and Venezuela and not least because Mexico brokered the rapprochement.

Not since 1986 have OPEC and independent producers worked together to ruin in supply. There are hopes that other non-OPEC members such as Norway might follow suit.

Fergus McLeod, oil analyst with NatWest Securities, said producers would not obtain the 2 million of cuts they want but half this figure will be enough to significantly affect prices.

Outlook, page 25

Siemens offers UK wages in euros

By Michael Harrison

SIEMENS, the German electronics giant, intends to offer its UK workforce the option of being paid in euros after the launch of the single European currency next year.

Siemens, which yesterday became the first company in Britain to open a bank account in euros, employs 13,600 people in the UK manufacturing semi-conductors, electrical equipment and power generation plant.

"Until the Bank of England is prepared to signal it thinks interest rates have probably gone high enough, there will be no great release of breath in the markets," said Ms Cottrell.

With the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee not due to meet for another two weeks, however, there appears little prospect of short-term relief for Britain's export industries.

Siemens has already invited its suppliers to bill in euros although it stresses that they will not be forced to use the new currency. Its UK arm spends £1.5bn a year on supplies, of which about £500m worth comes from 13,000 UK suppliers.

The decision to allow employees to opt for payment in euros is likely to be followed by other large foreign investors in the UK and is an indication of how Britain may end up with a decision to adopt the single currency.

"It will come in by the back door," said Mr Euler. "More and more companies will adopt the euro, particularly those who are exporters. They will have no choice but otherwise they will be at a competitive disadvantage."

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£1.2m deal for departed NatWest chief

By Les Paterson

THE NATWEST director who quit in the wake of last year's £90m options mis-pricing losses is set to receive a package of £1.2m, it emerged yesterday.

This includes a pay-off of more than £300,000, a salary of £150,000 and almost £750,000 in performance-related bonuses, payable next month.

But the chairman and the chief executive of NatWest have waived their 1997 bonuses following the bank's "disappointing" year.

Martin Owen, formerly chief executive of NatWest Markets (NWM), the bank's investment banking arm, resigned last summer and handed back £200,000 - two-fifths of his 1996 bonus after options mis-pricing by a NWM trader left an £90m "black hole" in the bank's accounts.

NatWest's annual report to shareholders, published yesterday, reveals that Dr Owen, a former Salvation Army officer, will next month receive a total of £738,000 because NatWest Markets met "certain performance criteria" between 1995 and 1997. £175,000 of this

total relates to the 1995 performance, £214,000 relates to 1996 and £350,000 relates to 1997 - the year not only of the options mis-pricing scandal but also of NatWest's decision to withdraw from certain parts of investment banking.

In addition, Dr Owen received a salary of £150,000 for the six months of last year when he was NWM's chief executive. Under the terms of his contract with NatWest, he also netted a pay-off of more than £300,000 when he resigned, of which £35,000 was taken in cash and is detailed in the bank's reports. The remaining sum - approximately £275,000 - was not disclosed in the annual report and was paid into a personal pension plan.

Derek Wanless, NatWest's chief executive, has waived his 1997 bonus in the light of the bank's performance last year, as has Lord Alexander, chairman, and Paul Mynders, responsible for Gartmore, the bank's embattled fund manager.

Mr Wanless' pay for last year totalled £450,000. In 1996, he earned £639,000, including a performance-related bonus of £225,000. Lord Alexander's pay

last year was £434,000. In 1996, he received £564,000, including a performance-related bonus of £154,000.

Mr Mynders, who is responsible for Gartmore, NatWest's fund manager, received £109,000 last year. In addition, under a Gartmore "short term incentive plan", he received a payment of £333,333 last March. He is entitled to £333,333 this month and a further £333,333 in March 1999.

In addition to their salaries, Mr Wanless and Lord Alexander may be eligible for "medium-term" incentives in the wake of NatWest's recent performance, although they will not be payable until at least 2000.

Martin Gray, chief executive of NatWest UK, the retail bank, received a total of £405,000 last year, including a £105,000 bonus. Richard Delbridge, NatWest's finance director, received £478,000, including a £140,000.

Last month, NatWest's profits fell by 10 per cent, and the bank admitted to difficulties in several non-core businesses. Before tax, NatWest Markets lost £706m in the year to December, a fall of £804m.

By Andrew Yates

THE SALE of the Savoy Group of hotels, which could fetch more than £500m, may be threatened by a split in the Wontner family, which hold a substantial stake in group. Family resistance to the deal is likely to extend one of the longest-ever running corporate sagas.

Some of the family members, including Lady Wontner, are understood to be lukewarm about the prospect of the Savoy falling into American hands, according to sources close to the talks.

Others are pushing for a sale but are unhappy about the way Granada, the leisure and media giant which has a large stake in the group, has proposed to divide the proceeds between the holders of the Savoy's B-shares, which carry full voting rights, and the A-shares, which have fewer voting rights.

Advisers working for Granada and the Wontners are believed to have met in an effort to thrash out a deal. However, intense negotiations are likely to rumble on for weeks, if not months, and continued opposition from some members of the family could even scupper the sale completely.

The Wontner family have controlled the group for more than 40 years, fighting off numerous takeover attempts, and it has taken Granada two years to get this close to a deal. But there are doubts it can muster enough support for a sale.

"We have got this far so many times before and then seen

a deal crumble. There is always a chance that it could happen again," said one source close to the talks.

Blackstone, the US investment bank, has emerged as front runner to buy the hotel chain after indicating it could offer £520m for the group. However, there is likely to be a fierce bidding war for the group's trophy hotel assets, Claridge's, The Connaught and The Berkeley, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Meditrust and Patriot American Hospitality have also submitted informal bids for the Savoy.

However, no firm offers have been received and the bidding process could be delayed until the group's shareholders can reach a settlement on the share structure.

Granada has made no secret of the fact it wants to sell the 68 per cent in the Savoy it inherited when it acquired Forte. A deal has been bogged down by the Savoy's complicated share structure which has led to a heated debate between the group and family shareholders.

Granada believes that the groups B-shares should be valued at only two-times the A-shares, at odds with the family which believes they should be priced at up to seven-times the A-shares. Some members are even calling for the B-shares to be priced at 10-times the A-shares. The negotiations have been clouded by the fact that the Wontner family may have lost control of the group, holding less than 50 per cent of the shares between them.

NM Rothschild, the bank representing family trusts, and



Family fears: The Wontners are reluctant to see the hotel fall into American hands

Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, who represent charitable holdings, are waiting to hear the terms of any firm offer for the group before finalising any terms.

The Savoy board remains keen to broker a sale. The group has been rejuvenated by managing director Ramon Pajares, who wants to see the group's ownership resolved so he can concentrate on taking The Savoy name overseas. He is expected to unveil a strong set of annual results today.

The Savoy A-shares jumped another 137.5p to an all-time high of 1887.5p as bid speculation intensified.

Revenue accused of bullying investors with tax on non-existent profits

By Andrew Verity

THE INLAND Revenue was yesterday accused of bullying thousands of investors who will be forced to surrender investment bonds because of a Budget measure which will slap a penal tax on non-existent profits.

In a little-noticed measure, about 5,000 investors will be taxed as if they had made a 15 per cent gain on their investments - even if they have not made any money.

The measure, part of the Government's clampdown on tax loopholes, is targeted at holders of "personal portfolio bonds" - insurance-linked policies which allow investors to pick their own stocks.

The Revenue claims the bonds are used for tax avoidance by offshore investors.

It claims they avoid paying income tax as investments grow but then move abroad when the policy matures, escaping tax altogether. But financial advisers are attacking

the Revenue for what they say is a penal tax with no fiscal justification, in direct defiance of a decision by the House of Lords last year. They say policies have been issued to thousands of investors in the UK who will pay tax when policies mature.

While other life insurance policies have the same tax advantages the Revenue is imposing the charge only on personal portfolio policies.

Michael Bryant, chairman of Fraser

Smith, the independent financial adviser, said: "Investors in these bonds pay no less tax than investors in any other type of insurance-linked investment bond. Bringing in a tax on deemed, artificial profits smacks of penal taxation."

The Budget move runs against a Lords ruling last year when the Law Lords decided that investments could not be taxed differently just because they offered the chance to choose investments.

It is a retrospective attack on the policies."

The advisers say the Revenue is simply trying to abolish the policies by the back door. It has set a deadline of April next year before imposing the charge, effectively forcing holders to surrender policies. "Delaying the charge for one year so that investors can surrender existing arrangements, perhaps with additional tax and surrender charge, smacks of bullying," Mr Bryant said.

A spokesman for the Revenue said: "The changes will affect only a narrow range of financial products. Often the assets in these products are assets that were held before by the policyholder."

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Troubled times at Caradon

CARADON's chief executive designate, Jürgen Hintz, recently said he was thinking about starting a family. However, long-suffering shareholders hold to their cost that he already has an unruly child on his hands in the troubled building materials group.

The group unveiled a fall in underlying 1997 pre-tax profits from £178m to £153m, before restructuring costs of £24m. The company lost £8m from exchange rate movements but the real problem was the doors and windows division, which plunged into the red, losing £3.5m compared with a £20m profit in 1996.

Its North American businesses were hammered by a slump in demand for aluminium windows. In the UK losses were blamed on additional overheads from launching a new window range and a shortage of skilled installers. But it is a terrible performance given that Caradon had previously trumpeted this division as an important focus for the group and that the losses were run up at a time when both the US and UK building markets were strong.

Hintz, its German doors and windows business, paled on the misery but, at least, Caradon can legitimately blame difficult trading conditions for the £3.9m fall in profits. At least Caradon's plumbing, electrical, structural and engineering divisions performed reasonably well.

Mr Hintz, who speaks the language of shareholder value, has been at Caradon since November but does not formally take over his post till May. No immediate sales are in the offing as the company battles to get profits moving in the right direction again. But he has hinted at a big shake-out and the doors and window division is likely to be cut back.

Caradon shares crashed a further 17p to 188p yesterday. Analysts were unimpressed by fears that the group indicated that its ongoing restructuring would eat up a large part of its cash flow.

Caradon's share price performance could have been even worse but for last year's share buy-back. However, the possibility of another return to shareholders looks remote in the short term.

Analysts cut 1998 pre-tax forecasts by about £4m to around £163m which puts Caradon on a forward multiple of 10. That looks low, but Mr Hintz has a lot to prove. Hold.

Caradon: At a glance

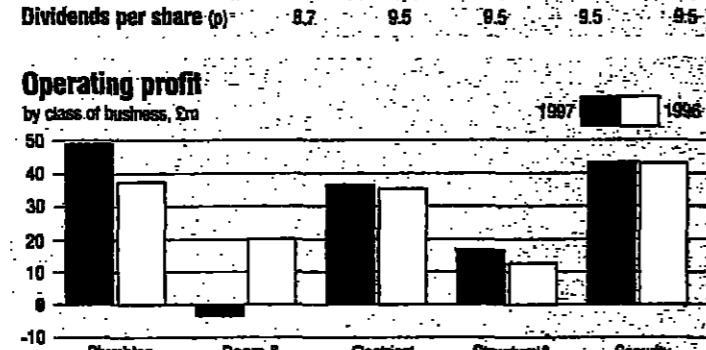
Market value: £974m, share price 188p (-17p)

Five-year record

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£m)	0.9	2.0	2.1	2.1	1.7
Pre-tax profits (£m)	213.4	201.2	114.3	152.5	129
Earnings per share (p)	31.3	19.9	9.2	15.8	13.9
Dividends per share (p)	8.7	9.5	9.5	9.5	8.5

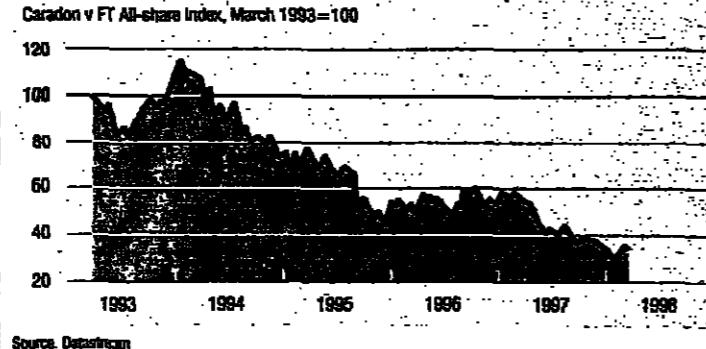
Operating profit

by class of business, £m



Share price against the market

Caradon v FT All-share Index, March 1993-100



Northern Leisure's spree

WITH conglomerates having fallen out of fashion and focused companies all the rage, Northern Leisure is playing the right time. The nightclub owner has put in the sort of performance that must have sent shareholders dancing with delight by simply sticking to what it knows best.

The group deliberately eschews the trendier night spots in London which wax and wane with the latest fashions. Instead, Northern Leisure specialises in buying clubs from local owners in provincial towns.

By sprucing up the clubs and using its buying power to cut costs it has proved it can earn the sort of margins

and return on capital that is enough to turn most leisure companies green with envy. Using this simple strategy Northern Leisure has been able to expand rapidly through acquisitions. With plenty of sites still up for grabs it now plans to accelerate this spending spree by opening at least 15 new clubs a year. The key to its success is a strong management team, most of whom have done little else but run night clubs throughout their working lives and who are locked into long-term incentive schemes.

Not all of the clubs are firing on all cylinders at once as fickle youngsters turn to different venues. But as its portfolio grows it can spread the risks and the group benefits from more economies of scale.

Profits for the six months to March almost doubled to £7.2m, and like-for-

like sales are currently growing at nearly 6 per cent.

The shares slipped 2.5p to 512p but the stock, which is one of *The Independent's* tips of the year, has still risen by a quarter since January. House broker Collins Stewart forecasts full-year profits of £1.7m, putting the shares on a prospective price-earnings ratio of 25. Still worth the entrance fee. Buy.

A victim of the market's lack of appetite for small company stocks until a recent mini-revival, Hamleys shares have fallen well below their high of 439.5p in November 1996.

With £3m of cash expected at the year end and with strong cash flow, Hamleys can certainly afford the buy-back and signals that there are no plans for any acquisitions. This news, together with a decent set of results, pushed the shares 14.5p higher at 273.5p.

Though profits rose 10 per cent to £7.6m in the year to January, Hamleys is finding it difficult to move the sales line. Sales at the flagship Regent Street store were flat due to lower tourist spending because of the strong pound. And like-for-like sales are only marginally ahead in current trading.

The better news is in the margin, with higher own-brand penetration offering scope for improved returns not just at the main store but in satellite units at airports too, where own brand sales of Hamleys teddy bears and so on are higher.

Last year's £8.7m Toy Stock acquisition is performing well in its first eight months. A roll-out of more stores in shopping centres is planned.

Management is also planning more franchise stores in the Middle East and Europe, and a £1m refurbishment of the Regent Street store starting next spring should provide a boost.

On analysts' forecasts of £9.3m this year, the shares trade on a forward rating of just 9. Even though this is likely to be a difficult year for retailers, that looks too low.

By Andrew Verity

SOME of the world's largest gold mining firms are in talks to launch commemorative gold millennium coins, which could consume over 1,000 tonnes of the precious metal.

SBC yesterday said the project, which the Swiss bank's brain child, could help prop up gold prices, which have been wallowing near 18-year lows since the start of the year, in the run-up to the celebrations at the turn of the century.

But bullion market sources were sceptical that 1,000 tonnes of gold worth around \$10bn (£6.1bn) and equivalent to nearly a third of total world demand in a year, could be consumed in the minting of the millennium coins.

"Just because you are coming out with a project does not mean you will have any takers for it. It won't take metal out of the market unless people buy it," one senior London gold dealer commented.

Gold was fixed at \$292.80 an ounce in London yesterday.

Though profits rose 10 per cent to £7.6m in the year to January, Hamleys is finding it difficult to move the sales line. Sales at the flagship Regent Street store were flat due to lower tourist spending because of the strong pound. And like-for-like sales are only marginally ahead in current trading.

The better news is in the margin, with higher own-brand penetration offering scope for improved returns not just at the main store but in satellite units at airports too, where own brand sales of Hamleys teddy bears and so on are higher.

On analysts' forecasts of £9.3m this year, the shares trade on a forward rating of just 9. Even though this is likely to be a difficult year for retailers, that looks too low.

ABi last Wednesday topped

morning up \$1.20 on its previous close in the New York market.

The millennium coins project would be led by Canada's Barrick Gold in co-operation with fellow Canadian miner Placer Dome, South Africa's Anglo American Corp and Newmont of the US, an SBC spokeswoman confirmed.

Anglo American, the world's largest gold producer, confirmed it was considering issuing a gold coin to mark the millennium in partnership with other large producers of the precious metal.

"We have had some preliminary discussions with various other parties and we certainly think it is a very good idea," said James Duncan, spokesman for Anglogold, which is Anglo American's gold division.

"Just because you are coming out with a project does not mean you will have any takers for it. It won't take metal out of the market unless people buy it," one senior London gold dealer commented.

People have been issuing coins down through time and celebrating the birth of a new century seems like an opportune time to do it again. Anything that promotes the use of gold needs to be looked at very seriously. It seems like a jolly good thing to do. What



OUTLOOK

Sir Donald's exit is as well timed as his entry

SIR DONALD GOSLING and Ronald Hobson, the duo who founded a dull old car park business 50 years ago only to discover they had a goldmine on their hands, look like they are selling out at the top of the market. The £800m that Cendant of the US is paying for National Car Parks to the rest of us may only represent a 17 per cent premium. But this is hardly the most liquid of stocks, given that 72 per cent of it is in just two pairs of hands. What's more, those institutions who bought into NCP back in 1986 have already had their stake money back and can now look forward to a four-fold return on their original investment.

The plan had been for the two founders to hang on for a demerger of NCP's Green Flag roadside breakdown business later this year and the flotation of the car parking operation after that. But neither of them is getting any younger, Mr Hobson is 77 and Sir Donald is 69, and a flotation would not have allowed either to cash in all their chips at once.

There was plenty of talk yesterday about how Cendant will use its muscle as a "global provider of consumer and business services" to sell customers of NCP's car parks everything from car rentals to hotel rooms.

It is certainly true that for a business akin to a license to print money, NCP has

been run in the most primitive of manners. It only discovered the computer three years ago, and most of the transactions still involve cash being handed over at the kiosk. So there is more business to be leveraged off its 65 million customers a year. But the environment is not getting any kinder for motorists, particularly those who drive to NCP's city centre sites. Gordon Brown did not do better car parking peaks in this time around but maybe he will next year. Meanwhile public transport, not the private car, looks like the business to be in. The departing duo at NCP may have timed their exit almost as well as their entry.

Rerating of the telecoms sector

TELECOM stocks are suddenly flavour of the month. And we are not talking here only about the thrusting young upstarts, Colt and Energis, or the fast growing mobile operators, Vodafone and Orange. Even the old dinosaurs of British Telecom and Cable & Wireless are enjoying un-dreamt of favour. For the first time ever, BT is trading at a small earnings premium to the rest of the market. Why the reappraisal?

One reader phoned to claim Rupert

Murdoch, who already has links with BT, was about to bid for the whole shebang. Certainly this might explain BT's inflating share price. A magnum of champagne to him if he's right. But although the idea of a fully blown bid from an already dominant media company seems a little far fetched (as does the recent suggestion that Bill Gates might take a stake), he's thinking along the right lines.

When the Government floated BT in the early 1980s, it tried to sell the company as a gee whiz technology stock that might expect to command a consequent premium rating. After all these years, investors may finally be starting to believe the story. This is the information age, and BT ought to be uniquely placed to exploit it. Furthermore, with the lines between media and communications increasingly blurred, it's reasonable to assume BT may become as much an entertainment company as a telephone operator.

Another cause of the rerating is deregulation of the Continental telecoms market, which came into force on 1 January. BT seems well placed to benefit - in the same way as Colt and Energis are already feeding off the soft underbelly of the market here in Britain - with state of the art modern networks. Maybe, but there's a certain lack of logic about this argument since

as far as the totality of the market is concerned, deregulation is a zero sum game - with lower margins and one operator stealing market share from another.

Despite this, the share prices of the continental monopolies are surging in tandem with BT. Since the true beneficiary of deregulation must be the consumer, not the producer, this doesn't make sense. Never mind. When a sector is re-appraised, it is as much about fashion as anything else and this particular fad shows no sign of abating. For the time being, investors should sit back and enjoy the ride.

Opec's gain is our loss

SO you thought OPEC was dead. Judging by last weekend's agreement to reduce oil output, there's life in the old cartel yet: OPEC's ability to manipulate the market to the advantage of producers seems as potent as ever. Indeed, this time round, the world's major oil exporters have surpassed themselves by roping in non-OPEC countries too in their bid to remove the oversupply of oil. As a result, this latest initiative seems to stand a better chance of doing the trick than anything else tried in recent times.

Never forget, however, that what's

good news for the oil companies and the big oil producing nations (of which Britain is still one), is generally bad news for the rest of us. The deflating oil price of the last six months has had a deflationary effect on the world economy at a time when the Asian crisis has been pulling violently in the other direction. These two influences have to some extent been cancelling each other out. If last weekend's agreement succeeds in limiting supply and raising prices, then the effect of the Asian collapse on the world economy may be that much more violent.

Oftel's unknown warrior

THE NEW HEAD of Oftel, the telecommunications regulator, has two things going for him. David Edmonds (who he?) was available at very short notice having restructured himself out of his last job at NatWest just before Christmas. He also came cheap, having agreed to take the job for £18,000 less than his predecessor Don Crickshank. Beyond that, he is an unknown quantity. But telecoms as the blurb pointed out yesterday, is a fast changing world and Oftel may find itself merged with the ITC. Mr Edmonds should take care not to be restructured out of another post.

Amey plans shopping spree as profits rise by one-third

AMERY, the construction group, yesterday said it was in a good position to continue to grow organically and by acquisition. Brian Staples, the new chief executive, unveiled a pre-tax profit of £14.6m, up 33 per cent from last year. It proposed a total dividend of 11p per share, up 20 per cent. "Effectively, we'll be looking for significant acquisitions in the core areas of rail, highway maintenance," Mr Staples said. Amey Homes, Asfara and Sport-Tec are considered to be non-core and may be disposed of, provided agreeable terms can be reached.

Rose named head at Argos

STUART ROSE has formally taken over as chief executive of Argos, the catalogue retailer that is battling against a £1.6bn bid from Great Universal Stores. Mr Rose was named as acting chief executive last month when it emerged that Mike Smith was unable to fulfil his duties due to illness. Argos will make an announcement about its future strategy on Wednesday.

Small caps 'undervalued'

MORE than a third of investors feel brokers do a poor job of researching small companies, according to a KPMG Corporate Finance survey. The survey included more than 100 fund management organisations and found that although investors have more money available for the smaller cap sector, they have growing problems making specific investments. "The result is that many quoted small companies are undervalued and increasingly vulnerable to takeover from private equity investors," Neil Austin, head of new issues at KPMG Corporate Finance, said.

Tarmac wins M&S contract

A SELECT NUMBER of Marks & Spencer stores in Britain and France will undergo extensive remodelling at the hands of UK builder, Tarmac. Tarmac Building has been awarded the £69m M&S contract which will refurbish stores in Glasgow, Nottingham, Chester, Derby, Milton Keynes and Handforth in Cheshire, and the construction of a new M&S store in Marseilles.

Record whisky exports

THE UNITED STATES remains the biggest market for Scotch whisky, surpassing the £300m barrier for the first time, according to the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA). Global export records were set in both the value and volume of shipments in 1997, up 5 per cent and 8 per cent respectively. The volume of imports increased in every market outside of Europe, where tax hikes on spirits have increased and a strong pound has been blamed for the fall. The SWA said the industry faced the continuing strength of sterling and economic difficulties in Asia.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Alcon Group (F)	135.6m (118.8m)	17.2m (10.1m)	24.2p (14.4p)	
Alcon Group (F)	152.0m (145.0m)	3.7m (3.75m)	23.0p (19.6p)	7.0p
Alcon (F)	38.8m (32.8m)	1.4m (1.1m)	31.1p (22.4p)	11.0p (9.0p)
Alcon Group (F)	91.7m (97.5m)	-1.8m (1.56m)	-10.8p (8.8p)	2.5p (2.25p)
Alcon Group (F)	203.3m (195.0m)	24.1m (23.0m)	38.5p (37.5p)	16.3p (15.1p)
Alcon (F)	1.62m (1.69m)	125.0m (152.5m)	13.9p (15.8p)	9.5p (8.5p)
Alcon Group (F)	5.93m (13.2m)	-16m (4.85m)	-7.7p (-4.88p)	
Alcon (F)	95.1m (84.7m)	24.4m (22.25m)	41.4p (38.5p)	14.5p (13.0p)
Alcon Group (F)	45.02m (30.48m)	7.57m (6.88m)	23.7p (18.8p)	11.0p (9.0p)
Alcon (F)	45.02m (30.48m)	7.57m (6.88m)	23.7p (18.8p)	11.0p (9.0p)
Alcon Group (F)	154.7m (137.1m)	4.4m (2.7m)	8.65p (4.85p)	2.75p (1.3p)
Alcon (F)	2.75m (2.82m)	51.8m (163.7m)	13.7p (5.42p)	2.2p (2.0p)
Alcon (F)	116.5m (112.7)	4.15m (3.41m)	4.05p (1.41p)	1.0p
Alcon Group (S)	58.28m (53.77m)	4.68m (5.50m)	14.8p (19.8p)	8.0p (8.0p)
Alcon (F)	- (-)	1.22m (-1.04m)	-10.0p (-10.4p)	0.0p (0.0p)
Alcon Group (F)	890.7m (897.5m)	112.1m (112.0m)	32.8p (28.7p)	15.2p (14.6p)
Alcon Group (F)	144.5m (130.0m)	9.71m (7.8m)	9.33p (7.12p)	3.87p (3.47p)
Alcon Group (F)	3.56m (2.65m)	0.407m (0.283m)	3.89p (2.47p)	1.25p (1.0p)
Alcon Group (F)	22.3m (15.12m)	7.21m (3.71m)	9.4p (5.4p)	4.5p (2.5p)
Alcon Group (F)	113.2m (105.4m)	15.73m (13.78m)	19.1p (16.8p)	7.5p (6.0p)
Alcon Group (F)	22.05m (13.77m)	0.955m (0.592m)	7.94p (5.29p)	1.33p (1.25p)
Alcon Group (F)	88.7m (73.5m)	4.87m (5.20m)	15.2p (13.4p)	8.5p (5.7p)
Alcon Group (F)	159.3m (155.6m)	9.04m (5.01m)	4.0p (1.7p)	3.8p (3.0p)
Alcon Group (F)	111.8m (84.2m)	12.17m (5.02m)	3.23p (1.11p)	1.0p (0.8p)
Alcon Group (F)	349.52m (250.0m)	16.74m (14.01m)	7.8p (7.1p)	2.70p (2.34p)
Alcon (F)	101.22m (105.1m)	10.3m (19.8m)	26.2p (22.7p)	8.7p (7.59p)
Alcon Group (F)	32.8m (15.8m)	1.97m (1.60m)	2.8p (1.3p)	0.8p (0.4p)
Alcon Group (F)	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)

(F) - Final (S) - Interim

	Japan (yen)	Malta (lira)	Netherlands (gulders)	Norway (krone)	Portugal (escudos)	Spain (pesetas)	South Africa (rand)	Sweden (kroner)	Switzerland (francs)	Turkey (lira)	USA (\$)
Australia (dollars)	2,4248	20.84	61.26	2,2971	0.8688	11.37	9,0658	9,9441	2,9773	519.17	1,0790
Austria (schillings)											
Belgium (francs)											
Canada (\$)											
Cyprus (pounds)											
Denmark (krone)											
Finland (markka)											
France (francs)											
Germany (marks)											
Greece (drachma)											
Hong Kong (\$)											
Ireland (pounds)											
Italy (lira)											

Source: Thomas Cook

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The world-wide quest for balanced budgets among finance ministers



**HAMISH
MCRAE
ON THE
RISE OF
THE S-WORD**

STABILITY. This is the new buzz-word of finance ministers. We had a dose of the UK version last week from our own Gordon Brown. At the weekend we had the European version from Theo Waigel, the German Finance Minister, suggesting that the economic and monetary union (EMU) stability pact should be brought forward.

Yesterday this was endorsed by Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the European commissioner for economic and monetary affairs.

And tomorrow we will get a feeling for how the European Union (EU) proposes to cope with the potentially destabilising effect of the high-debt EMU members - countries that do not formally comply with the entry criteria, but which will become founder members of EMU none the less.

This drive for stability raises two questions. The first is why?

Why has it suddenly become the dominant force not just in European politics, but in most mature democracies? After all, one of the reasons why President Clinton is so popular is that he appears to be delivering a balanced budget.

As far as European countries are concerned there is, of course, the immediate pressure from EMU, which is forcing the countries with a record of instability to try to lift their game. But the quest for stability carries a price in higher taxes.

and this does not explain the ease with which these countries have sold this burden to their electorates. Nor does it explain why the Chancellor here puts this to the top of his wish-list - or the favourable response in the US to the prospect of the balanced budget.

I think the answer lies in a changed set of preferences by voters, to which politicians feel they must respond. Go back five years and fiscal virtue was something which politicians felt had formally to favour, but in practice they were prepared to allow deficits to flourish. Now they seem to be acting - despite the short-term pain - in the same way as they talk.

If this line of argument is right, we could be in for a prolonged period of fiscal stability, a period when the normal practice is not just for budgets to be balanced, but for the long-term trend of public sector debt as a proportion of GDP to come down world-wide. This would lead to the second question: what effect will a long period of fiscal stability have on the world economy and the climate for investment?

The starting point of this answer is whether the s-word, stability, will lead to the d-word, deflation. The case that the world of investment has utterly changed was well made earlier this month in a paper from the *Global Investment Strategist*, one of the publications of the Bank Credit Analyst group in Montreal. It argues that yesterday's rules, the rules for an inflationary world, no longer apply. For the last 18 years all you had to do was to buy equities when there was the prospect of a fall in interest rates.

Now, the authors argue, the rules are changing. If you look at the relationship between equity and bond returns over the last 40 years, periods of low inflation cause the correlation to become negative. So at some point falling interest rates could become a negative for equity investment: it would be a sign of worsening deflation, rather than a trigger for a new equity boom.

The time to worry about bonds, on the other hand, is when growth surges. To see this point, have a look at the graph, which charts US bond yields and G7 growth since 1980. There have been a number of points, marked by the arrows, when growth has fallen off sharply (bottom graph). In each case this seems to precede or coincide with a fall in bond yields, also marked by the little arrows. The authors have taken G7 growth (rather than just US) and US bond yields (rather than some weighted G7 bond yield, but the similarity is striking, none the less). The conclusion is that since global growth is slowing this is not a time to worry about rising bond yields.

This paper notes three other investment themes. One is global bond convergence - as global deflation takes hold, the chances are that all bonds in the main currencies will move towards each other, perhaps to a 4 to 5 per cent range. The moral here would be to sell very low-yielding ones (like the Japanese) and buy US and UK bonds. European bonds should be held.

The second theme is that the Japanese authorities panic when the Nikkei index goes below about 16000. Each time that has happened there has been a determined effort to stimulate the economy. So far, the four packages in the last five months have failed to achieve much. But expect a more determined one shortly, maybe including some relaxation in the sales tax, the tightening of which last spring helped push the economy back into recession.

The third theme is that the equity cult in the US will not continue for ever. "In the short term," the authors acknowledge, "it could keep going and may even sprout into a full-fledged mania. In the bigger picture, however, the deflation of policy taking place here." Well, that is just one view and an evidently unfashionable one at the moment, given what share prices have been doing around the world. I suppose the explanation for that is that we are seeing the pluses from global deflation - in particular near zero inflation - without yet catching any sight, except in East

Asia, of the minuses. You do not need to argue that the imbalances in North America and Europe are anything like as great as those in East Asia - they are not - to accept that the deflationary impact on the world economy from the reversal of fortune of its fastest-growing area will have considerable deflationary impact on the West.

Indeed, it is interesting that our quest for stability should be coming at exactly the same time that East Asia has hit the buffers. On the one hand this makes it easier for Europe and North America to reach the goal of low inflation. But it also gives a further twist to the tightening of policy taking place here.

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Weight of history favours Cambridge



Dreadnought drill: Cambridge's oversize crew - who average nearly 15st - run through their paces on the Thames yesterday
Photograph: Peter Jay

Rowing
By Hugh Matheson

CAMBRIDGE won the "Contest d'Apollon" at the Boat Race weigh-in yesterday with the tallest and heaviest crew in the history of the race simply confirming a trend that has been inexorable since the race began in 1829.

The "muscular Christians" of 19th century tradition passed the 12st mark in 1867, but it took another nearly 70 years to move up a grade to a 13st average in 1936. The well-fed baby boomers born after the Second World War

cranked it up a notch to a 14st average in 1976 and this year Cambridge missed ringing the 15st bell by only half a pound per man.

The heavier crew has tended to win, but over 80 times the lights have taken it. This time the Cambridge margin over Oxford is 13lb per man and if the Dark Blues win it will be the biggest disparity between the best lightweights - limited in the men to 11st - and the openweights, the differences in performance are decreasing.

The world's fastest time in the coxed four was held by a British lightweight crew from London Rowing Club until it was beaten by the narrowest of margins by the British heavy-

weight crew who won the World Championships last summer.

Thor Neilsen, a coach who chairs the international technical commission, thinks that the introduction of lightweight divisions to the Olympic programme means the differences will disappear.

Sean Bowden, coaching Oxford this year, says that, if the physical restrictions were removed from the equipment, there might be no need for lightweight divisions. "With a 96kg weight for the shell and 55kg of coxswain to pull along, there is bound to be an advantage to the bigger crew in

an eight, but this is an artificial restriction and if the costless boats were tailor-made for the crew at whatever weight, who knows how fast they would go."

Bowden explains that by pointing to the power-to-weight ratio as the key element in rowing. "Roughly: to double your speed you must cube your power, so clearly you are not going to push them up to 18 or 19 stone. It just won't work."

When asked why even though his crew this year is 13lb a man lighter than Cambridge he is still picking the bigger men in his group, he says:

The changing shape of Boat Race oarsmen

1867 12st
1936 13st
1976 14st
1998 14st 13lb

This year's Cambridge crew are the heaviest and the tallest (average height 6ft 4 1/2in) in Boat Race history. Oxford are an average of 13lb lighter than their Cambridge counterparts and if they win on Saturday it will be the biggest disparity in weights ever overcome in the race.



BOAT RACE CREWS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY: Toby Wallace (Jesus) 15st, Brad Crombie (Peterhouse) 15st, Alex Story (St Edmund's) 15st, Marc Weber (St Edmund's) 15st, Jonathan Bull (Emmanuel) 15st, Stefan Forster (Peterhouse) 15st, Paul Cunningham (Gomville and Caius) 15st, Cox: Alastair Potts (Trinity Hall) 6st. **OXFORD UNIVERSITY:** Charlie Humphreys (Oriel) 12st 10lb, James Roycroft (Keble) 13st 10lb, Jürgen Hecht (Keble) 14st 10lb, Henrik Nilsson (Hertford) 14st 2lb, Eli Coode (Keble) 14st 10lb, Andrew Lindsay (Brasenose) 14st 2lb, Paul Berger (Lincoln) 14st 3lb, Nick Robinson (Lincoln) 13st 6lb, Cox: Alex Greaney (St Edmund Hall) 6st.

Ireland rely on same squad

Rugby Union

IRELAND's team to play England in the Five Nations' Championship will be named later this week after the 23-man squad originally selected for Saturday's match against Wales was selected again.

The Shannon lock Mick Galwey, the only man left out of the final party for Saturday's 30-21 defeat by Wales, was included along with the 22 on duty at Lansdowne Road.

Malcolm O'Kelly returns from international duty to boost London Irish's efforts to climb away from the Allied Dunbar Premiership. One relegation zone when they face Gloucester this evening, O'Kelly will play alongside the captain, Nick Harvey, in the second row, with Gabriel Fulcher on the replacements' bench.

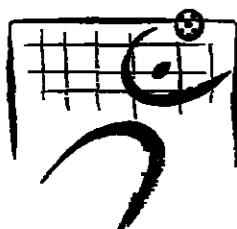
Niall Woods comes in at full-back for Conor O'Shea (cheek injury), while David Charles is on the left wing instead of Woods in the only two changes from the side which beat Wasps 38-19 last week.

Gloucester will be without their England A wing, Brian Johnson, after he suffered concussion against Scotland A on Friday. Audley Lumsden replaces him, while the lock Mark Cornwell (back) and Phil Vick (shoulder) are both absent.

Dave Sims - who makes his first League appearance since dislocating his shoulder last November - and Andy Deacon are in the starting line-up.

IRELAND SQUAD: Backs: C Clarke (Teviotore College), R Wallace (Sunderland), D Heale (St Mary's College), M McCaffrey (London Irish), K Maggs (Bristol), R Henderson (Wasps), D Humphreys (London Irish), E O'Keeffe (London Irish), C O'Keeffe (St Mary's College), B O'Meara (Cork Constitution), Forwards: R Corrigan (Glenavon), P Wallace (Sunderland), N Pappalardo (London Irish), C Clancy (London Irish), K Wood (Hartpury), K Neeldale (Newcastle), P John (Sunderland), M O'Kelly (London Irish), M Galwey (Shannon), E Miller (Leicester), D Corrigan (Bristol), C O'Keeffe (St Mary's College), A Ward (Ballymoech).

PHILIPS ECOTONE



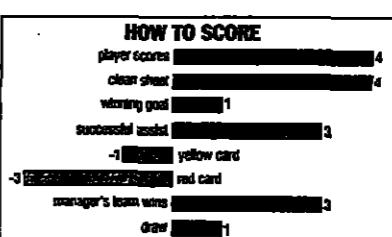
Today we publish the updated results of The Independent Fantasy Football League. The league table includes all scores up to March 8th. The player list includes scores from all games played until March 22nd. Neither set of scores includes results from the FA Cup. The overall winner at the end of the season will win a pair of tickets to the World Cup finals in France this summer.

Every time one of your players score you get four points. There are four points for a keeper or a defender every time their team keeps a clean sheet. If a player scores the winning goal, i.e.: if there is a one goal difference in the scoreline, the player scoring the final goal for the winning team is awarded 1 bonus point awarded in addition to standard goal related points. Each successful Assist, a pass judged by our experts to lead directly to a goal, will give a player 3 points. The opinion of our experts on the matter is final. Each player selected and starting a game will be awarded one point.

If a player is given a Yellow Card they lose 1 point, if a player is given a Red Card they lose 3 points. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count.

The Premiership Manager that you choose will be awarded 3 points if their real-life team wins, 1 point is awarded if they draw and no points are given if they lose.

Updated player scores and league tables will be published every Tuesday in *The Independent* and repeated the following Sunday in the *Independent on Sunday*.



Independent Fantasy Football

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 8 AUGUST - 8 MARCH

LEAGUE TABLE		
CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 8 AUGUST - 8 MARCH		
POS	NAME	TEAM
1	Mr D Edmington	Edmo United
2	Mr J Hayes	Early Birds
3	Mr Archer	No Wright
4	Mr C King	Feeling Victory
5	Mr P Tuft	Piu Ups 4
6	Mr D Evans	Boothen End Old Boys
7	Mr J Cox	Southville FC
8	Mr D Baker	Deju Vu
9	Mr B Sari	Simply The Best
10	Mr A Choudi	Nikies 9th 11
11	Mr D Sari	The Untouchables
12	Mr D Aston	Billy Boys 2nd 11
13	Mr S Scott	Unbeatable
14	Mr I Boyle	Wembly Bounders
15	Mr A Wincroft	Tony's Boys
16	Mr T Lyons	Diana's Demons
17	Mr I Brown	The Hoofers
18	Mr S Aston	Billy Boys 3rd 11
19	Mr G Bell	The Hairy Monsters
20	Mr P Cridland	PDC2
21	Miss L Wild	Amcerreto FC
22	Mr M Evans	Mikes C Team
23	Mr P Pawley	Roberts Raiders
24	Mr A Mitchell	Nursery Park Rovers
25	Mr A Cunningham	The Zebra
26	Mr M Evans	I've Started But Will I Finish
27	Mr E Adams	Mikes A Team
28	Mr A Mitchell	The Eye For It
29	Mr S Scott	The Dream Team
30	Mr T Brazier	Wow For Short
31	Mr K Boyle	Clogston Rovers
32	Mr D Ackroyd	Jack's Lads
33	Mr J McCrossan	Washed Up Army
34	Mr M Evans	Mikes B Team
35	Mr G Smith	The Jolly Come Lately
36	No Name	Leo Dis
37	Mr D Thomas	Scunthorpe Extras
38	Mr Brady	Look Lively
39	Mr J Cox	Retno Rovers
40	Mr I Bikar	Manbo Mambo
41	Mr A Cottrell	Bray D'ynamo
42	Mr P Tuft	Piu Up 2
43	Cox	
44	Appley	
45	Krems	
46	Berg	
47	Le Sam	
48	Colman	
49	Kenna	
50	Hosker	
51	Van Gobbel	
52	Seales	
53	Lees	
54	Dodd	
55	Benni	
56	Van Gobbel	
57	Seales	
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168		

Wales will have to perform miracles to win outright this season



ALAN
WATKINS
ON
RUGBY

AFTER the Dublin match several current and former Welsh players were asked about the prospects of a share in the Five Nations' Championship if they managed to beat France at Wembley on 5 April. They smiled shyly and replied that, well, "anything was possible in this world".

Evidently neither they nor their questioners had fully absorbed the new rules of the competition. Until 1992, the countries level on points in the table as the result of matches (two for a win, one for a draw) shared the title. Thus France and Ireland shared it in 1983, France and Scotland in 1986, France and Wales in 1988; and in 1973 there was a five-way tie.

After 1992 the title was

finally decided by the difference in points for and against in the four matches each country would have played. So in 1994 England beat Wales at Twickenham on the last Saturday of the season. But it was Ieuan Evans, the then Welsh captain, who collected the new trophy under the points-difference rule.

This was the last time Wales won the championship. It is not so long ago when you come to think about it, despite the noise of wailing and gnashing of teeth which has been audible from my native land for the past 20 years; or so it seems to be to me.

But Wales will have to perform miracles to win outright this season: not only to beat

France – which is possible – but also to beat them by a huge margin. In the current table they are level with England, after three matches each, with four points. But they have a deficit of 19 points, while England are in credit to the sum of 41. France, with three wins out of three, have a credit of 44.

You do not have to be Professor Stephen Hawking to work out the possibilities. If England beat Ireland at Twickenham on 4 April, and Wales beat France at Wembley on the next day, these three countries will have won three matches, and the outcome will be decided on points difference.

In the circumstances England are well in line to take the title. In points difference thus

far they are trailing France by only three.

I hope this outcome does not come about, for several reasons. I think Ireland deserve to emerge with something from this year's competition. Though I admire what Clive Woodward, the England coach, is trying to do, I possess no such warm feelings for the new Twickenham crowd, who manage to combine ignorance with chauvinism in roughly equal proportions. And last – and certainly not least – I have £100 (plus pre-paid tax) on France to win the championship at the highly favourable price of 13-8.

Accordingly what would suit me best on the weekend of 4-5 April would be for Ireland to beat England, and Wales to beat

France, but by a margin of less than 63, which is a fairly reasonable supposition in the circumstances.

France would then win the championship even though they had won only three out of four matches.

If they beat Wales, even by the narrowest of margins, they would take the championship however many points England had managed to pile up against Ireland on the previous day, because they would have won four matches and the Grand Slam.

Something tells me that on Sunday 5 April my economic self-interest will be at odds with my sentimental feelings.

England, alas, will have beaten Ireland comfortably, by 20 or 30 points. But Wales will walk out

on to Wembley – a ground that seems to suit them, as it certainly does their supporters – determined to give an inevitably nervous France a run for their money.

For once Kevin Bowring, the Welsh coach, has, not, perhaps, a luxury of choice, but a comfortable leeway in certain positions.

For instance, does he prefer Leigh Davies to Scott Gibbs, who is fully fit? And does he keep Stuart Davies in the side, while moving Colin Charvis across to the position in which he first distinguished himself for his country, at No 7?

When Davies was first recalled as a substitute in preference to Scott Quinnell, my first response was to think that

this was a bit like bringing back Cecil Parkinson to add

some much-needed sparkle to

the Conservative Party. Not at all; when Davies was substituted for Kingsley Jones, with

Charvis moving to the open

side, he ran away from the Irish

cover and gave the excellent

Neil Jenkins his try.

My ideal outcome, as I say,

would be a win for Ireland and

for Wales. In the unlikely event

of Wales being able to score

enough points to leapfrog

France on points difference, I

should be prepared to grin and bear it, even though I should

have lost £100-plus.

It is more likely, I fear, that my money on France will be sacrificed to England rather than to my native land.

Redknapp and Matteo double up for England

By Glenn Moore
in Berne

ENGLAND'S depleted squad arrived in Switzerland yesterday having decided to overcome the problems of injuries caused through too much football by asking two players to be involved twice in 24 hours.

Jamie Redknapp and Dominic Matteo, already members of tonight's under-21s-plus oldies squad, will also be on the bench for tomorrow's senior match in the Wankdorf Stadium. This is unlikely to be enthusiastically received at Liverpool, who seem to lose Redknapp – who will play as a sweeper tonight – to injury whenever he is involved in the England set-up.

The move increases the full party, who have suffered nine withdrawals to 19 including three goalkeepers, although Andy Hinchliffe, the only full-back in the party, is still doubtful with lingering problems from his Achilles injury.

"It's frustrating," Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, said. "We seem to get it more than anyone, but they are all legitimate injuries. It could be even worse next time."

Next time is the home game with Portugal on 22 April. Unlike this week that will be preceded by a full Premiership programme with six possible squad players involved in the Liverpool-Coventry match on the Sunday before the international. "Portugal is a very important match," Hoddle said. After it England will only have a home match with Saudi Arabia and two games in Casablanca against Morocco and Belgium before the World Cup.

Hoddle said the injuries meant he would have to bring forward an experiment he had planned for later. This could mean playing Dion Dublin at the back, or a pair of attacking players, such as Rob Lee and Steve McManaman, in the wing-back roles. Finally, thinking positively, he added: "It means a chance for someone else. At

least – apart from Robbie Fowler – these are all injuries which have time to heal before the summer."

This change of mood reflected Hoddle's own preaching. He had been in his pastoral mode on Sunday night, counselling Tony Adams, who is troubled by a sore back and a recurrence of his ankle injury.

"He was very down," Hoddle said. "It was a big blow after all the problems he has had. We had a long chat with him and he left us feeling much more upbeat and positive.

"We have put him on a 10-day programme using weights and stretching exercises which is as much preventative as recuperative. He has to get hold of the reins, but I've told him there is no reason why he cannot come back."

Indeed, Adams is likely to play for Arsenal as early at Saturday's home game with Shetland Wednesday.

Hoddle must have been tempted to head straight for the headquarters of the Red Cross when the party touched down in Basle yesterday, but instead the coach and his squad headed for their hotel via a two-hour journey through wintry countryside.

They are the first England team to visit Berne since 1954 when the team were competing in a World Cup rather than just playing for places in one. A side including Billy Wright, in his first game at centre-half, Tom Finney and Tommy Taylor beat the Swiss hosts 2-0 with goals from the Wolverhampton Wanderers' pair, Jimmy Mullen and Dennis Wilshaw.

Wolves had a trio of representatives in that game and in a further illustration of the transitory nature of football, Birmingham City, Huddersfield Town, Portsmouth and Preston North End provided five other players.

There was one link with the current side in that the centre-forward, Ivor Broads, came from Newcastle but, in a further departure from the present day, Manchester United were able to provide two injury-free players – Taylor and Roger Byrne.

Wing and a player: Air France yesterday unveiled some of the 16 aircraft from its fleet that will carry images of footballers from each of the 32 nations in the World Cup finals. The picture in the foreground on an A30 Airbus depicts a Dutch player who bears an uncanny resemblance to the England midfielder Steve McManaman

Photograph: AP

McManaman must destroy the myth

STEVE MCMANAMAN strolled casually off flight BY815 at Basle airport yesterday, looking up at the grey Swiss sky, then sauntered towards the waiting coach. He looked like a seen-it-all-before holidaymaker rather than a footballer with his World Cup destiny in the balance.

McManaman's body language is as offensive to some as Peter Reid's verbal version. Languid in the extreme, he is the antithesis of the fist-clenched, bawling scrapers beloved by the English game.

There is no guarantee that the 26-year-old will play against Switzerland in Berne tomorrow.

It would appear that he and Paul Merson are contesting one place, a belief Hoddle has encouraged rather than dis- pelled.

He offers fewer clues as to his preference. McManaman, said Hoddle, played "as well as I have ever seen him" last week against Spurs – when he had a floating role behind Michael Owen. But he is also complimentary about Merson and, by piling him out of midfield, destroyed his team on Sunday, would appear to want to play him tomorrow.

Frustation is the theme of his career. Locally born, though initially an Everton fan, he has lived through a lean decade at Anfield. In the 1990s they have

won just a trophy apiece in the FA and Coca-Cola Cups – scant achievements against Manchester United's dominance.

The story is the same on a personal level. Since his 1994 debut he has appeared 19 times for England but, after appearing to establish himself in Euro 96, has played only four times for Glenn Hoddle and just once in the last 360 days.

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Rumours persist that

Hoddle is less enamoured with McManaman because he and Robbie Fowler pulled out of the tournament but McManaman said: "There was never a problem and I want to kill that myth off. I've not spoken to the gaffer [Hoddle] about it, I've never had a floating role behind Michael Owen. But he is also complimentary about Merson and, by piling him out of midfield, destroyed his team on Sunday, would appear to want to play him tomorrow.

Rumours persist that

Steve McManaman (right) has been labelled a chronic underachiever. But Glenn Moore finds his competitive nature fired up to win an England place for France 98

aiming for perfection, everyone looks for improvement in themselves.

"The will to win is always there with me. I may not show it as much as other people but the passion is strong. I want to win every game whether against a minnow in the FA Cup, a big League game against Manchester United or an England international. Maybe people say I've underachieved for England but I hope to smash that myth by doing well in the summer."

Hoddle said McManaman's spell as Liverpool captain had helped his football as it enabled him to "see the game differently in taking on more responsibility". Hoddle added: "He has had a good season, scoring goals has given him extra confidence. He has lost a couple of chains and he has been more consistent."

McManaman, whose keen and questioning intelligence has not always been popular with managers, thinks otherwise. "I've always been a talker. I've always tried to help the young lads in our team. It's not something that happened with the armband," he said. "Goal-

scoring isn't a problem for me. Sometimes they all go in, sometimes they don't. I don't worry about it."

All this is said with a sardonic air. McManaman sometimes gives the impression that he feels these question and answer sessions are beneath him and it is true that such gatherings – there are about a dozen press interrogations – can sometimes pursue a tired agenda. With McManaman it is the "underachiever" line partly because it also applies to his club and partly because, being a model pro who has missed one match in three seasons, there is no "my injury/drugs/drink-bell" line to pursue.

However much he may resent it, such is his and his club's talent it will continue to be raised until Liverpool win the title and he establishes himself at international level.

Tomorrow McManaman will find out if Hoddle, whose fitful international career has many parallels, is prepared to offer him a chance to show that he, at least, can fulfil his potential.

Gascoigne to make decision on future today

By Alan Nixon

PAUL GASCOIGNE'S future will be resolved today when the player decides whether to stay at Rangers or head south. Mid-derbyshire and Crystal Palace have each had £3m offers for the England midfielder accepted by the Glasgow club.

Gascoigne played as a second-half substitute for Rangers in their 2-1 home win over St Johnstone on Saturday. At the end of the match, he made no farewell gesture to supporters despite them chanting his name.

Gascoigne's advisor, Mel Stein, said yesterday: "We will come to some kind of conclusion tomorrow."

Sheffield United have called

off their proposed transfer of Ian Rush. The veteran striker faces either spending the rest of the season at Newcastle United scrapping for first-team outings or a swift search for a new club.

Rush has been with Sheffield United for a month and was sounded out before Nigel Spackman resigned as manager about making the move permanent. Although Rush played for United at the weekend, he was told yesterday by the club's secretary that they could only offer him a loan deal until the summer. Rush had been expecting a contract taking in next season.

Neil Ruddock's wish to leave Liverpool could be granted. Ray Harford, the Queen's Park

Rangers manager, is keen to bring the tough-tackling centre-back to west London to help halt QPR's slide down the First Division. Ruddock has turned down a couple of similar offers.

Georgi Kinkladze can carry on playing for Manchester City as they fight to avoid relegation from the First Division this season. The Georgian midfielder had his trial on charges of dangerous driving put back to 18 May at Trafford Magistrates Court yesterday.

Newcastle United hope to sign the promising young striker Paul Robinson from their neighbours Darlington in a £1m deal. Tottenham are also said to be interested in the 18-year-old who has scored some spectac-

ular goals in the Third Division this season. Darlington want a large payment up front plus instalments to take Robinson's total value to seven figures.

Sasa Cacic, out of favour at Aston Villa, could yet stay in England after his marriage to his English fiancée, Lisa, brought forward to last week, solved the problem of his losing his work permit for not playing enough games for Villa. The midfielder has until 5pm on Thursday, the transfer deadline, to decide whether to agree a £1m move to Crystal Palace, or follow up on a reported offer to help Second Division Fulham to fulfil their ambitions.

Tunisia, England's opening opponents in this summer's

World Cup finals, suffered a serious setback yesterday when they learned that their most impressive midfielder, Hassen Gabi, will be out of the game for six months because he needs an operation on knee ligaments. Tunisia play England on 15 June.

Manchester United have invested £14m in a new training complex built on the banks of the Manchester Ship Canal which will be a "world leader in sport" according to their chairman, Martin Edwards. The complex, at Carrington, will have nine full-sized pitches, four junior pitches, a goalkeeping training area, running, physiotherapy rooms, a hydrotherapy pool, a sauna and steam rooms.

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Lambert suffered an ankle injury in Celtic's 1-0 victory at Aberdeen on Saturday, while his club-mate Burey has a hamstring strain. Brown has also lost

two strikers, Kevin Gallacher and Gordon Durie.

CRAIG BROWN, the Scotland manager, will be forced to field a virtual third-choice midfield in tomorrow's World Cup warm-up friendly against Denmark at Ibrox.

With Gary McAllister, John Collins and David Hopkin already ruled out, the last thing Brown needed was any more absences from his midfield pack. Yesterday, though, he learned that both Paul Lambert and Craig Burley have withdrawn from his squad.

Birmingham City's Nigerian-born striker, Dele Adebola, may have to miss the chance to make his debut for Northern Ireland against Slovakia at Windsor Park tomorrow. He in-

curred a back injury on Saturday against Nottingham Forest and was unable to fly to Belfast the following day. A decision on his fitness will be made today.

Wimbledon's Kenny Cunningham will captain the Republic of Ireland against the Czech Republic in Olomouc tomorrow. Andy Townsend has retired from international football after five years wearing the armband, while other candidates like Roy Keane and Steve Staunton are injured.

Wales are likely to field two debutants against Jamaica at Ninian Park tomorrow: the 18-year-old Norwich City striker Craig Bellamy and Barnsley's German-born defender, Darren Barnard.

دعا من الراحل

Henman proves master of Moya

Tennis

By John Roberts
in Key Biscayne

THE joy of watching Tim Henman in full flow was one of the delights at the Lipton Championships yesterday here in the British No 2 advanced to the last 16 with a 6-1, 6-4 win against the Spaniard Carlos Moya.

All the doubts which have cramped Henman's elegant style in recent months appeared to evaporate with the overnight rain as the 23-year-old from Oxford dominated his opponent from the start, displaying even greater authority than when defeating Moya in the 1997 final in Sydney to secure his first ATP Tour title.

Henman was almost unrecognisable from the edgy performer who had lost five of his opening-round matches this year while clinging to a place in the top 20 and almost losing sight of his Davis Cup teammate, Greg Rusedski, on his rise to No 5.

One of Henman's early departures came in his last tournament on a similar concrete court at Indian Wells, California.

nia, two weeks ago, where he lost to Wayne Black, of Zimbabwe. Yesterday, Henman was able to file that ragged performance, and several others, in the recess of his mind.

"This is the best I've played this year, for sure," he said. "The consistency and quality of tennis was just as good as it gets for me. The way I've played here and in Indian Wells is chalk and cheese. Wayne Black is a good player, but I was a stupid player. I played to my weaknesses."

For 4,000 spectators on the Grandstand Court yesterday, many of whom had come in the hope of cheering a Hispanic victory, the view of Henman's seemingly effortless serve and volley was handsome consolidation. One of the tournament's guests, Britain's Roger Taylor, one of the "Handsome Eight" who helped force the issue of open tennis 30 years ago, thoroughly enjoyed Henman's 65-minute performance.

Henman won eight of the first nine games, saving two break points in the fifth and retrieving four more from 0-40 when serving for the opening set after 29 minutes. The 18th-ranked Moya threatened

briefly, recovering from 0-2 in the second set, only to be put firmly back in his place in the next game.

After converting match point, Henman grinned broadly towards his coach, David Felgate. "When you're winning a lot, you take it for granted," Henman said. "That hasn't been the case in the last five or six weeks. Now I feel I'm coming out of it. It's satisfying and gives me a feeling of relief."

Many times during his form lapses, Henman has expressed frustration at his failure to translate his work in training into winning points. "I wasn't taking what I was doing on the practice courts on the match court," he said. "My game today was pretty clear cut - be aggressive - and I stuck to it. My serve was on song today, I was hitting the corners very well and coming in on my second serve. I didn't think there was an area of my game that wasn't working."

Practising with a revitalised Andre Agassi might have helped ("Andre's definitely for real. I think he'll soon be back in the top 10 or top five"). Contemplation had made a difference.

"When I lost in Indian Wells I didn't practice for two days," he said. "I played some golf. I didn't think it was necessary to practise straight away. It was more important to think exactly about what I was doing."

Last year at the Lipton, Henman lost his opening match against another Spaniard, Julian Alonso. The 20-year-old from Barcelona, ranked No 43 in the world and boasting the third fastest serve in the world (140

mph) after Rusedski, was eliminated by the American Vince Spadea in the first round on this occasion, but he is grabbing more headlines than his compatriots.

Alonso has been escorting the

Gossip columnists please note.

17-year-old Martina Hingis, world No 1 and Wimbledon champion. They were photographed hand in hand at the players' party at the All Star Cafe, in South Beach on Sunday night.

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Sixth Test: Another failure at the crease and Hooper's battling hundred ensures increasing pressure on Atherton over leadership

Stewart is England's saving grace

By Derek Pringle
in St John's, Antigua

England 127 & 152-3
West Indies 500-7 dec

IT WAS Michael Atherton's 30th birthday yesterday, but the England captain was in anything but celebratory mood following another batting failure that set the West Indies on their way after Carl Hooper's ninth Test century had allowed the home side to declare on 500 for 7, a forbidding lead of 373.

Facing a deficit as large as that is never easy and, with just over five sessions to bat, England were always under pressure despite a fighting 79 from Alec Stewart.

Atherton has not had a good tour with the bat and despite a rousing chorus of "Happy Birthday" from a surprisingly merry knot of England supporters, he was once again lbw to his nemesis, Curtly Ambrose, for the third time in eight innings. Changing ends to the Southern End for the first time in the match, Ambrose jagged one back at the captain, who once again was caught on the crease with nowhere to go.

In an age of analysis there will, of course, be those who point to the mode of dismissal as some kind of fault in either judgement or technique. In truth it is probably neither and against someone of Ambrose's calibre it was another tricky delivery that few would have got a bat on.

Even so, Atherton's tour figures are fairly damning and in 11 Test innings, including the abandoned Test in Jamaica where he made two, he has scored 199 runs at an average of 18. A figure significantly lower than his age and the poorest by a front-line batsman on either side.

Despite the pressure this kind of form puts any player under, let alone one who is captain, Atherton has not led his side poorly. Considering that he possesses significantly fewer match winners than the West Indies, England's competitiveness has been heartening.

Indeed, apart from an inability to rouse his troops from their torpor here and in Guyana, after they found themselves on the wrong side of the toss - a problem that stems from soft county cricket rather than soft leadership - he has been far less cautious than usual.

Where he can be faulted is over his continuing stubbornness in selecting an out of sorts Jack Russell, who in the end appeared to become a hapless pawn in a game of bluff my call, between Atherton and the media. Mind you, rumours of Stewart's unwillingness to take the gloves - always denied by Stewart - may have compounded the matter.

Stewart keeping wicket would have given England extra bowling options; one of the arguments for Stewart not doing so was that it would force the Surrey man to bat down the order. It is a valid point and Stewart once again did his best to support it by scoring heavily.

Touted by many as a stop-gap successor to Atherton, who will surely not be asked, or indeed want, to endure any more from a team who have rarely matched his own resolve, Stewart was in sublime form. Driving

straight, and cutting square, something he rarely contemplated when he faced Ambrose and Courtney Walsh on the first day, when the pitch was both damp and dangerous, Stewart took the opportunity to make hay. When he is on song, few in England are as punishing, and he confirmed that yesterday when he savaged Franklin Rose with an array of scintillating cut shots.

He did not always have

things his own way, however, and just before lunch, following the West Indies declaration. There was a big appeal for a catch behind after he tried to dab-hock a short ball from Rose. It was not the only let-off and Ambrose later dropped a difficult chance at mid-off when the opener tried to loft the leg-spinner, Dhananath Ramnarine, over the top.

Anyone watching Stewart

over the years would immediately have been suspicious when he began to point to his forearm. Surprisingly, umpire Cyril Mitchley concurred with the batsman's assessment of the situation. It was a theory that TV replays disproved when they showed the ball glancing off the shoulder of the bat.

It was a benefit of doubt not available to Stewart's Surrey colleague Mark Butcher who came to the crease after the fall of Atherton. He collected his second duck of the match after he apparently edged Ambrose to the wicketkeeper, Junior Murray.

After his vital but modest

role in the victory in Trinidad, Butcher has been found wanting. In nine Test innings here, he has not once passed 30, hardly the record of a No 3 batsman, a problematic position England will have to address immediately, if they are ever going to compete against the best sides in world cricket.

The prime candidate, pre-

suming Graham Thorpe does not want the job, is probably Nasser Hussain. After joining a now rampant Stewart, he played some fine strokes himself. When the pair had added 78

for the third wicket, however, Stewart, pushing forward to Hooper, was caught by Philo Wallace at silly point. It left England listing on 127 for 3, and Hooper contemplating his second important contribution to the wicketkeeper, Junior Murray.

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Photograph: David Ashdown

The West Indies celebrate as England's Mark Butcher is caught behind by junior Murray off the bowling of Curtly Ambrose in St John's yesterday

Glory of diverse batting talents

By Henry Blofeld

THE West Indian innings was an extraordinary mixture of genius, classical grace, robust opportunism and sheer blood-mindedness. Between them Brian Lara, Carl Hooper, Philo Wallace and Clayton Lambert supplied all these ingredients.

With Lara, wrists and fast footwork combine with an instinctive awareness of length and a glorious repertoire of strokes to take the breath away as he brings off the most outrageous extravagances. There is, in his batting something of the fun and dash which belonged to Denis Compton in the years after the war. Lara's genius may never turn on another show like his 375 here in Antigua four years ago. Even so, this innings was as compelling as it was irresistible.

Then came the classical grace of Hooper, who, like all truly fine batsmen, makes the business of orthodox strokeplay look supremely easy. No contemporary batsman plays a better off-drive and the quality of Hooper's would stand with any in the history of the game.

He will pull the fastest of bowlers after positioning himself with neat, exact, and never hurried footwork. He is incapable of an ungraceful movement and there is a stately precision about every stroke he plays. It is his concentration which is apt to falter and it is the reason he will almost certainly go down as an under-achiever.

The other two batsmen who prospered in this innings, Wallace and Lambert, are making a name for themselves with the frenetic starts they have now given the West Indies in three successive innings.

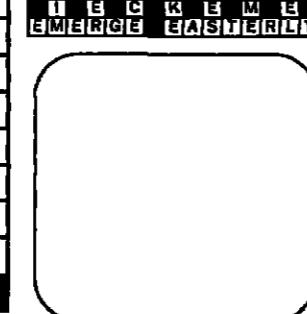
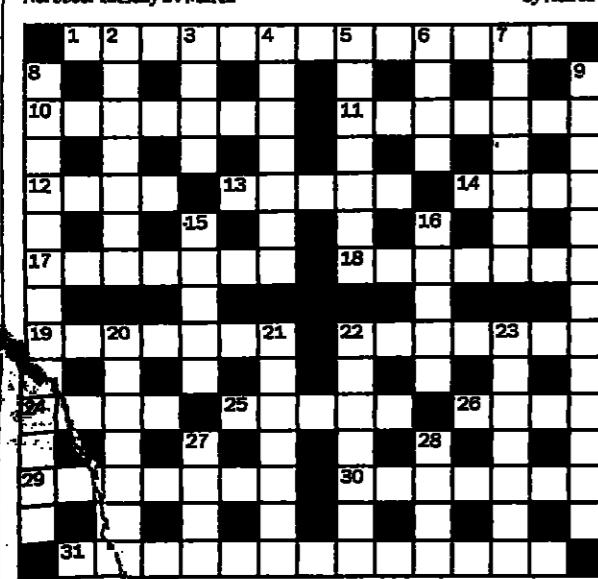
Wallace is by nature the more belligerent, hitting the ball as hard as anyone. He is ready to plunder the bowling from the very first ball and he is no crude slogger either. His 36-year-old left-handed partner looks at the crease a little like a crab in his dreadfully open-chested stance. But, early on, when the ball is new, he likes to give it a real crack. Then, as the innings goes on, he withdraws more and more into his shell. Altogether, this West Indian innings was one of interesting contrast.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3566. Tuesday 24 March

By Astred

Monday's Solution



Ambrose neutralises Atherton

By Tony Cozier

HE WAS 34 years old, a back injury had forced him to return home early from the tour of Pakistan, where he managed only one wicket in two Tests, and he was a pale imitation of the finest fast bowler the game has known in the first few domestic cup matches of the season.

They were all worrying signs that the career of the great Curtly Ambrose was coming to its end. There were even reports that he had written a letter of retirement to the West Indies Cricket Board. But Ambrose knew himself and that reports of his demise were greatly exaggerated. He had promised, on his return from Pakistan in December, that he would be fit and ready for the challenge against England. His back complaint was purely muscular, nothing serious, and was quickly cured by plenty of swimming in the ther-

apeutic Caribbean waters that surround his native Antigua.

He had heard England's boast that they had a real chance this time of beating the West Indies and warned: "That really motivates me."

He wasted no time in converting his prophecies into reality and, even now in the twilight of his active days, has enjoyed his most productive series in the Caribbean.

The England coach, David Lloyd, has identified his bowling and the support of the other West Indies veteran Courtney Walsh as the difference between the teams.

As always with the West Indies, they have been particularly keen to put the pressure on the opposing captain. It is a tactic which goes back to the days when Clive Lloyd, the current manager, led them and always had four menacing fast bowlers at his disposal. Tony Greig, Ian Botham, David Gower and

Kim Hughes were among those who withered under the assault.

Michael Atherton has

undergone the same strain this season and Ambrose has been the principal executioner of the policy. Atherton was only

persuaded to make the tour by his feeling that England had a chance to reverse 30 years of disappointment here. Not since 1968 had they returned home triumphant, but given the West Indies' recent setbacks it was not an over-optimistic assessment.

Instead, Atherton has had a miserable time, caused principally by Ambrose, who completed his sixth removal of the skipper with a clear-cut lbw in the final innings yesterday.

Atherton goes back not only with his dream of team success shattered, but with his own position as leader surely now at an end. In his long years of retirement, the tall spectre of Curtly Ambrose will haunt him.

Thin Clients are

MORSE

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